February 14, 1950

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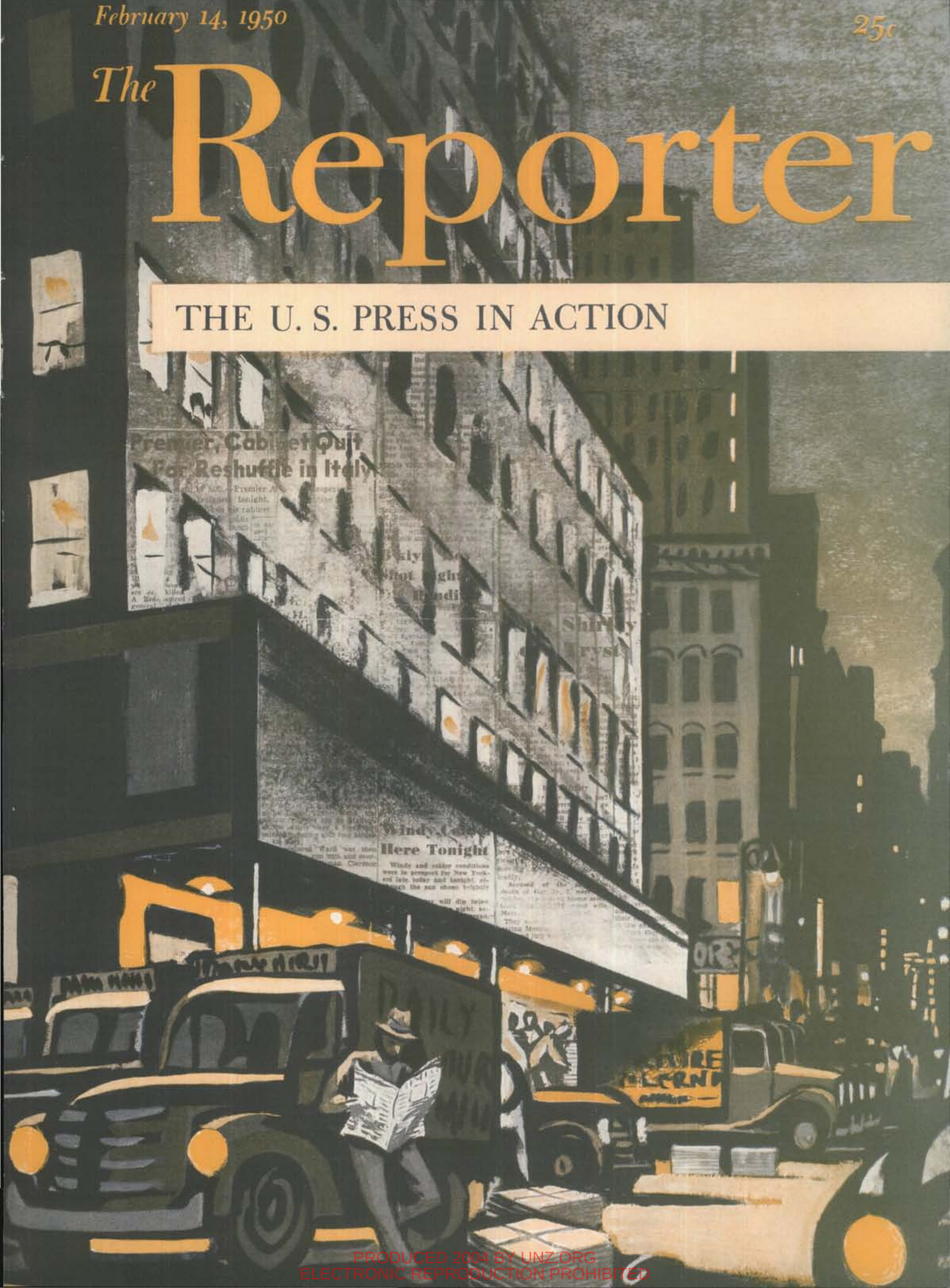
The Reporter

THE U. S. PRESS IN ACTION



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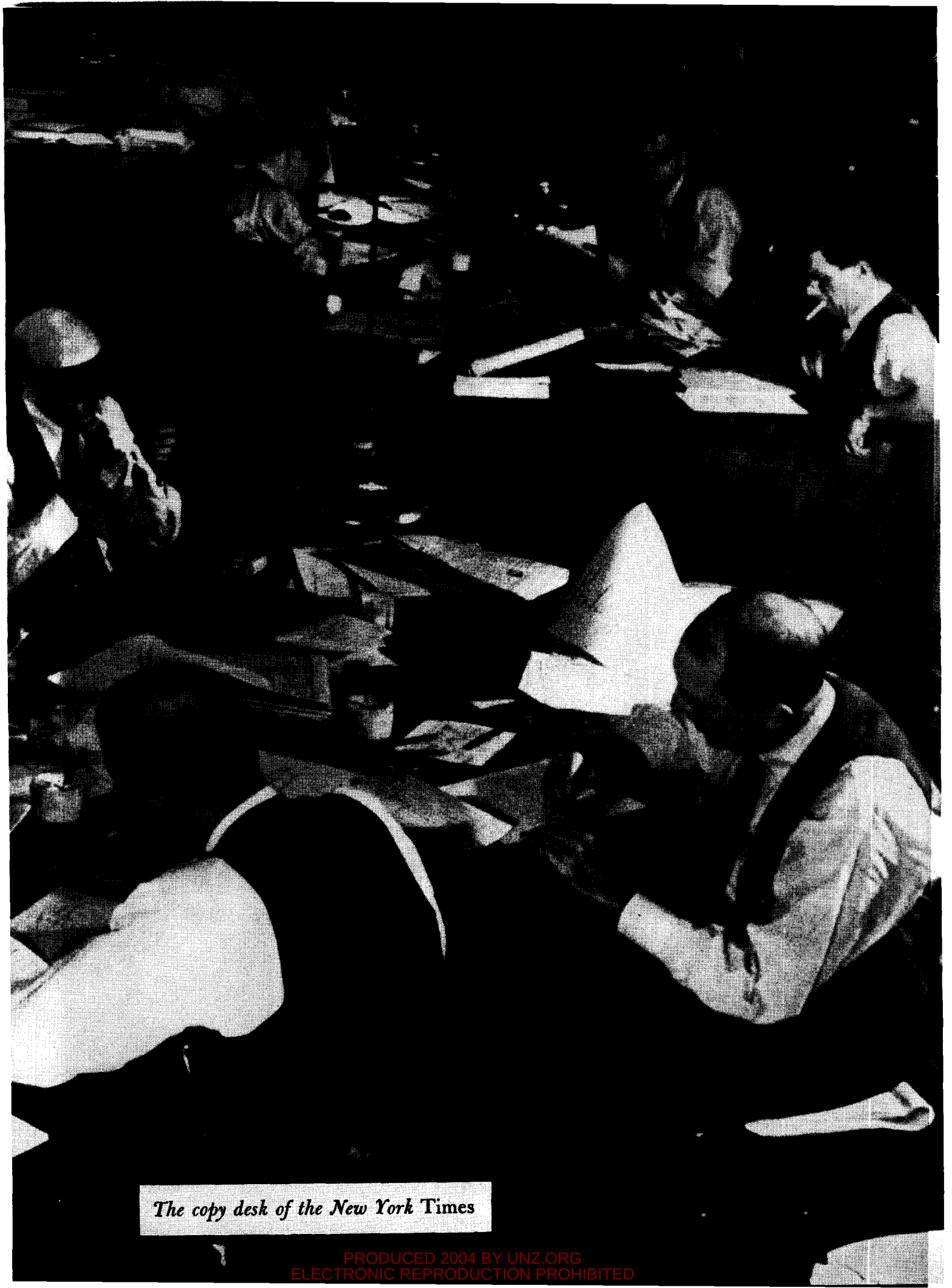

The copy desk of the New York Times

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The Reporter's Notes

Old Joe's Ashes

The trend is unmistakable: With increasing frequency and severity, new sentences are passed on our wartime leaders. They are in for a trouncing, all of them, those who are dead and those who are alive, and it is a safe guess that no one of them will be

spared. Roosevelt was the first, and is still, the favorite target. Marshall's turn is just beginning, and Stimson will be next. Recently, true to form, General "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell got a posthumous "hell of a licking," this time in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

In a series of three articles, entitled "Why We Lost China," Joseph Alsop is extremely hard on Old Joe. Mr. Alsop is one of the few journalists who know how to write contemporary history, as he proved in his book on the Supreme Court controversy, *The 168 Days*. It was about things that had happened on Mr. Alsop's Washington beat and that he could write about with all the authority of a thoughtful eyewitness. But, for all his wartime experience in China, the problem here is more complex. It is startling to read the title of the second article, "We Opened the Door for the Communists"—the "we" being General Stilwell, General Marshall, and a group of State Department officials, Far Eastern Division. It is hard to conceive that everything was so clear-cut, that Chiang Kai-shek had so little responsibility for the Kuomintang defeat, that Patrick Hurley, General Chennault, and General Wedemeyer were so frequently right and Stilwell so frequently wrong.

All this has happened before. It is called the judgment of history—a strange ordeal through which all those whose decisions affect history have to pass. They have to go through privately-initiated trials, privately conducted by prosecutors who are also the judges. Sometimes, no matter how conscientious the judge may be, it is difficult to get the evidence from all sides. But the judgment, particularly if it is to be published by the *Saturday Evening Post*, must be in definite, flat terms, without qualifications or shades—just black and white.

"Vinegar Joe" must have had an inkling that all this was bound to happen, and saw to it that his quick-tempered old bones would never have to turn in their grave. He asked in his will that his ashes be put aboard a military plane and strewed over the Pacific Ocean.

The Peaceful Atom

At the American Political Science Association Meeting in New York recently Mr. Cuthbert Daniel, an atomic expert formerly with the Oak Ridge Laboratory, talking of the use of atomic power for peaceful purposes, said:

"If the United States were to replace its coal consumption with atomic energy consumption for one year—assuming that possible—there would be the radioactive equivalent of several hundred thousand pounds of radium to get rid of."

Mr. Daniels said previously: "Large-scale atomic power production presents a grave hazard to mankind if the radioactive ashes are not disposed of safely. They lose their activity over a period of thousands of years, and during all this time they must be stored under conditions which make certain that no living thing is exposed to their harmful radiations. . . . The requirements for the safe storage of this material are fantastic."

In his State of the Union message to Congress on January 4, 1950, the President said:

"The first experimental machines for producing power from atomic energy are now under construction. We have made only the first beginnings in this field, but in the perspective of history they may loom larger than the first airplane, or even the first tools that started men on the road to civilization."

Somebody is wrong here—the atomic expert or the President.

What Else Can We Do?

Let's suppose that a big controversy is going on in a house, and that all the neighbors, good neighbors and bad, can hear every word that is said: "Should we have a new lock put on the door? The door is not safe. There are bad people around, and we must also have a gun, just in case." Of course, if the decision is not to buy the lock or the gun, it's an open invitation to the neighboring burglars. Why was the row so noisy to begin with? Now that everybody has heard it, there is nothing to do but make the hydrogen bomb.

In a Nutshell

The press is our theme this issue. It is one of these big subjects about which it is difficult to make oneself clear. Perhaps it can be put this way: Nobody would dare these days to say, "The public be damned." But most of our big newspaper and magazine publishers, and incidentally most of the movie producers and radio executives, seem not to waver in their conviction that the public be dumb.

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Correspondence

Recognize

To the Editor: There should be no question in anyone's mind as to whether we should recognize the Chinese régime under Mao Tse-tung. I believe the following quotation from an article in the autumn issue of the *Yale Review* by Professor Nathaniel Peffer proves my point of immediate recognition—the quote is: "a weak and helpless China is a greater danger to the rest of the world than a reconstructed and strong China, for a weak and helpless China invites the kind of rival foreign intrusions that make for war."

AUDREY SCHWARTZ
Brookline, Massachusetts

Don't Recognize

To the Editor: Let us not recognize the Chinese Communists by any means. It is true that Great Britain has recognized the Chinese Communists in the hope of preserving its trade interests and Hongkong colony, but it is highly unlikely that recognition will protect those interests. Britain is economically very hard up, and must grasp at every straw of hope; this does not mean that we have to follow its example in China nor does it mean Britain will be in the least offended if we do not. Nor is there any legitimate ground for recognition in the argument that Mao Tse-tung has established a *de facto* government and we are bound to grant recognition under the terms and spirit of international law. Since when have Communists been so interested in diplomatic and legal niceties? Certainly not in the case of Angus Ward. Nor is the United States in any way breaking a precedent, as for many years—and I think rightly—it refused to recognize the *de facto* government of Franco Spain.

As Yale University's Far Eastern Expert, Professor David Rowe, said in a recent radio interview: "The Chinese Communists' constitutional charter, recently promulgated in Peking, openly proclaims the régime's complete identification with Soviet Russia, making a vicious mockery of its claims to sovereignty and to the protection of China's independence. This régime is an ideological and political appendage of the Soviet Union, so much so that it expresses hearty support of Stalin's belief that war with America is inevitable, and Mao Tse-tung has already pledged all its support to him in such a war."

Our most sensible move is to keep Formosa out of the hands of the Communists and rely on the fact that China is a large and badly integrated country which for many years to come will be difficult for the Communists to govern and will provide a terrific expense to Russia if Stalin intends to modernize and industrialize it to the point where it could present a serious threat to the United States. Meanwhile, we can look for continued gains in Japan, India, the Philippines, and in western Europe of such proportions that Russia will crumble from the pressure of containment.

JOHN R. PENN
Contoocook, New Hampshire

Battle of Chilkoot (*Cont'd.*)

To the Editor: Your issue of November 22, 1949, containing Richard Neuberger's article, "The Battle of Chilkoot Pass," was received here and enjoyed. We got a bang out of his timely remarks, which were almost a forecast of some things that came about.

We were involved for a year and a half in a multiple litigation in the district court in as bald-faced an attempt at fraud as I have ever seen. Some former associates of ours attempted to grab off the property and the majority of the stock in an arbitrary move, and attacked the five of us who originated and invested in this thing. Our counter-claim of conspiracy to defraud was proven in every point and we won. Neuberger mentioned the fight over the school taxes with the town. We are about to drag this into court, too, and we believe we will win.

Most of us here are for statehood, but the outlook of grab-it-while-you-can of the "little" Alaskan will ruin this country as a state if something isn't done about it.

Re Neuberger's remark about the water rent: The town has paid us nothing although they have collected water rent from their people. We have asked for a share only, but the town claims it doesn't use our water; the politicians want to make its system look so bad that they will be able to get a sizable loan from public works. I won't shut the water off because the majority of the people in town would suffer, and the politicos live in a low area and get enough ground water to suit them even when our system is off.

With all the scrapping and bitterness, it is exciting and even amusing at times. If we can get a few more people of our type I think we will make it.

CARL W. HEINMILLER
Port Chilkoot, Haines, Alaska

Contributors

Richard Lewis, former city editor of the Indianapolis *Times,* recently joined the staff of the St. Louis *Star-Times.* Dwight Macdonald has been editor and publisher of the magazine *Politics.* Harold B. Hinton works in Washington as a correspondent of the New York *Times.* Fred M. Hechinger writes for the New York *Herald Tribune* and the Washington *Post* as special correspondent. Sydney Morrell has toured Canada extensively in recent years. Graham Hutton, British economist and writer, until recently gave a weekly commentary over the BBC. Marjorie Bremner, an American, received her doctor's degree from the London School of Economics, and is now doing free-lance writing in England. Elspeth Rostow lives in Geneva, Switzerland, as correspondent for the London *Economist.* Don Peretz, a young newspaperman, is just back from the Middle East where he spent eight months with the Quaker Relief Organization. William V. Shannon wrote the chapter on Massachusetts in Robert S. Allen's book, *Our Sovereign States.* Cover by Arthur Getz. Photographs from Black Star.

The Editors

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The Reporter
A FORTNIGHTLY OF FACTS AND IDEAS

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Editorial

'No Pause for Reflection'

The American newspaper business is a quaint, paternalistic, small or, at most, middle-sized business, in which ownership is still supreme over management. The owners are usually families which, from the public character of their private property, derive a prestige out of proportion to the capital they have invested. Scarcely another business has to carry so heavy a burden of social and political responsibility. But vital as it is to the nation, newspaper publishing, rather than the building trade, is the most under-developed area of our business system.

Frequently the social trust of newspaper ownership is transmitted by accident of birth or family affiliation. The families that own some of the surviving good papers run their businesses according to an exacting Victorian code of ethics. Considering the system, it is not surprising that so many newspapers are swallowed up by powerful competitors or big chains, but rather that a few newspapers still live up to high standards of professional integrity and manage to survive.

But the struggle is hard, and "survive" is just about the best they can do. To keep alive, these small business enterprises depend on the business system as a whole for advertisements. They are also at the mercy of labor, which understandably refuses to share with the publishers the eccentricity of living in a bygone era. Both advertisers and labor pursue perfectly legitimate interests. But the effect is that the advertisers strengthen the newspapers that are already strong, while the labor unions weaken those that are already weak.

The publisher is caught between. If he is determined and resourceful, he can manage to survive, and, particularly if he is not handicapped by too-strict moral and aesthetic prejudices, he can even reach large popular audiences and make good profits. But the squeeze is on him. He insists on controlling the editorial policy of his paper, for he is never allowed to forget that news and opinions are only two of the many elements that enter into the equation of a successful paper. It is on him that the combined pressure of advertising agencies and labor unions is brought to bear.

The American publishers approve of the most advanced forms of business organization in every kind of enterprise except their own. And the experience of the last generation proves them right: for consolidations and mergers have produced the newspaper chain, and assembly-line methods have given us the news magazine.

The Assembly Line at Work

When the news magazines came into existence after the end of the First World War, they were free from most of the fetters that make life miserable for the newspaper publishers. The news magazine, a nation-wide medium of information, could count on nation-wide advertising revenues. The first of these ventures, Henry Luce's *Time*, quickly reached the proportions of comfortable, middle-sized business. Then, to provide his advertisers and the business community at large with a house organ of their own, Mr. Luce started *Fortune*. Finally, the people's craving for pictorial entertainment was superbly taken care of by *Life*. For quite some time, Mr. Luce played with the idea of atoning for his success by bringing out a highbrow magazine designed to be untimely and unlifelike. The unfortunate project died unborn.

There are reasons why Mr. Luce should feel like atoning. In his magazines, and in some of those that have sprung up as imitators and competitors (with the distinct exception of the *United States News and World Report*), the weakest features of the American press are high-lighted. The seven-day span between issues is most frequently used to chop up, retouch, and slant the news to a point where resemblance with the facts is purely coincidental. Distortion, which to a large extent is unavoidable under the daily pressure of the news, has become the standard product of assembly-line processing. By selecting news on no other criterion than sheer "newsiness," the news magazines have overextended their coverage into every conceivable corner of the earth and realm of human activity; they offer their

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readers a weekly assortment of glamorous, luscious, and smart tidbits about everything and nothing.

It is particularly hard to understand why Mr. Luce has fallen into this pattern, for he is a man endowed with high motives and a genuine love of ideas, as an article in this issue of *The Reporter* proves. Indeed, he started *Time* with a capital of broad ideas and little money. But while his monetary returns have been extraordinary, his stock of ideas has become watered.

With all their financial plenty, the Luce publications have had to borrow ideas that would give some flavor and color to the news. Both Hoover and Willkie Republicanism, slick tabloid techniques, spiritual revivalism, the ruthless smartness of former Communists—nearly every displaced idea and every technique simulating an idea—has found a place in the Luce publications.

What Is the Matter With the Press?

Even when American publications come close to being Big Business, as in the case of the powerful news magazines and newspaper chains, they are still tightly controlled by their owners; with only a few exceptions, they give entirely subordinate functions to the managers; they are still centered on family dynasties, old and new.

In the great American parade, the publishing business is a unique sight. The sober, slow-moving victorias of the great, high-minded dailies; the buggies of the small-town papers; the frolicky, horse-drawn floats of the mass-appeal press—all roll along amidst the smoke and dust of the high-chassis, sputtering horseless carriages of the news magazines. The gentlemen and particularly the ladies with their straw hats and veils, perched on the high seats, add glamour to the show. However, even the most high-powered section of the press is still at least forty years behind our times—still operating as if it were in the pre-corporate, pre-managerial era.

There is something about the publishing business that dooms it to be an under-developed area in our economy. Perhaps we had better become reconciled to the paradox that the press whose function it is to catch the up-to-the-minute news cannot be adjusted to up-to-date patterns of business. Perhaps, after all, there is an irreplaceable handicraft quality in what is still the basic function of the press—reporting by men on the spot for those who are absent, to satisfy the people's need for vicarious presence.

The fact that so much power is often in the hands of men who head insecure financial structures is ominous but not necessarily fatal. At least no more fatal than many other features of a free society—as, for instance, the fact that as long as we have academic freedom the selection of university presidents is likely to remain a haphazard affair, or that the designation of the people's leaders is made by a handful of professional politicians.

The major trouble with the American press—daily and weekly—is that it doesn't give its readers or writers time to think. As a wistful editorial in *Life* puts it, the "system . . . all too often allows no pause for reflection." There is no reason why a weekly should not pause to reflect now and then, and even the dailies, with one-seventh of the time, could unquestionably pause more often than they do. The classic formula of the New York *Times,* "All the News That's Fit to Print," ought to be re-examined—particularly the "all" and the "fit"—for it results in rushing too much news straight to the printing plant. The London *Economist* said recently that the American press suffers from too much paper; actually, it suffers from too much news, verbose, often-meaningless news, promiscuously thrown at the reader. In order to enjoy freedom of the news, the public ought to be given a measure of freedom from the news.

The American press can survive in spite of the perhaps inescapable handicap of its economic backwardness. It can even survive under the dynastic system as long as there are families like the Sulzbergers and the Reids of New York, the Binghams of Louisville, the Meyers of Washington, the de Youngs of San Francisco, in the newspaper business. But it cannot survive if it is unwilling to retool the machines that gather and weigh the news.

This is a dismal picture, not the kind of picture that *The Reporter* likes to give. We have no patience with hopelessness, but the situation of the American press can become hopeless if only a few good dailies go down, and if the most successful weeklies remain just as they are.

Moreover, there are no magic or quick remedies in sight. The publishing business cannot be rescued by any kind of government subsidy. It has to remain a business, no matter how peculiar, and the purpose of every business is to pay dividends. The American press is unquestionably sick. The remedy, we believe, lies in tackling the most dangerous aspects of the illness and in showing that the public is best informed when it is given proven facts and a chance to see them in perspective—a chance to think. If we had not been convinced of this, we never would have bothered to start *The Reporter.* —MAX ASCOLI

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The Paper Goes to Bed

Quiet day in the city room: rape, suicide–and pressure from outsiders

At dawn, a shower of soot erupted from the chimney of the old hotel. It fell like black snow on the frosted automobiles parked overnight at the curb. The only person on the street at this gray hour was a trolley motorman, who hugged his lunch box under his arm to keep both hands in the pockets of his leather jacket. As he was passing the dark old hotel, he looked up, and saw the body of a man hanging behind a second-floor window. As he stared at it, the bony feet and thin ankles suspended above the sill made a slow quarter turn, until the body appeared in shadowed profile. Momentarily the motorman struggled between an impulse to flee and a need to tell. Then he pounded with his fist on the beveled plate glass of the lobby door.

When the city editor came to work at seven o'clock, he found that the fluorescent light above the city desk would not go on. He sat down in its shadow with a sudden feeling of depression. The defective tubes were another detail of disrepair, like the drawer that stuck in the old desk, or the swivel chair with a caster missing. Every morning these things reiterated their suggestion of the shoddiness and retrenchment which had appeared in the operation lately.

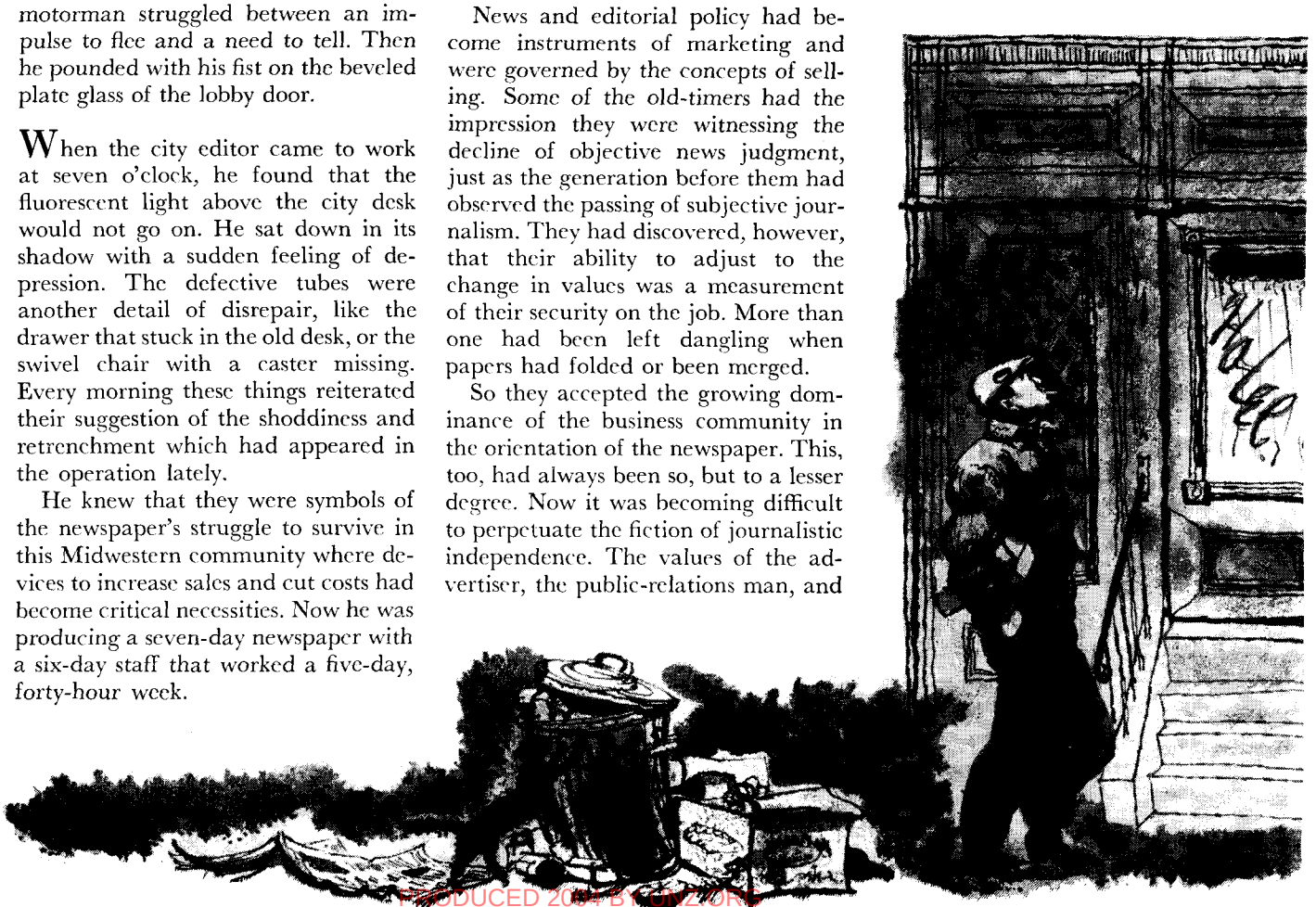
He knew that they were symbols of the newspaper's struggle to survive in this Midwestern community where devices to increase sales and cut costs had become critical necessities. Now he was producing a seven-day newspaper with a six-day staff that worked a five-day, forty-hour week.

His special problem was the fabrication of sensations, edition by edition, at a lower unit cost per sensation. Overtime had become taboo except in emergency, but the definition of emergency was changing under the stress of rising costs. It was evaluated in relation to the emergency confronting the newspaper rather than by an objective estimate of its impact on the community. The degree of effort to be expended in covering a story was determined by a calculation of the cost against potential sales. The business always had been so, he thought, but now it was more so.

News and editorial policy had become instruments of marketing and were governed by the concepts of selling. Some of the old-timers had the impression they were witnessing the decline of objective news judgment, just as the generation before them had observed the passing of subjective journalism. They had discovered, however, that their ability to adjust to the change in values was a measurement of their security on the job. More than one had been left dangling when papers had folded or been merged.

So they accepted the growing dominance of the business community in the orientation of the newspaper. This, too, had always been so, but to a lesser degree. Now it was becoming difficult to perpetuate the fiction of journalistic independence. The values of the advertiser, the public-relations man, and the promoter had come to be the values of the newspaper.

This was not as apparent in the handling of news as it was in the allotment of space. In his business relations with the newspaper, the advertiser now enjoyed a buyer's market. The newspaper had to concede to his demand for free space in the form of publicity in order to continue selling him space. Columns on real estate, furniture, automobiles, appeared in the guise of features. Since the number of columns the newspaper could produce was rigidly controlled by cost, these items displaced news.



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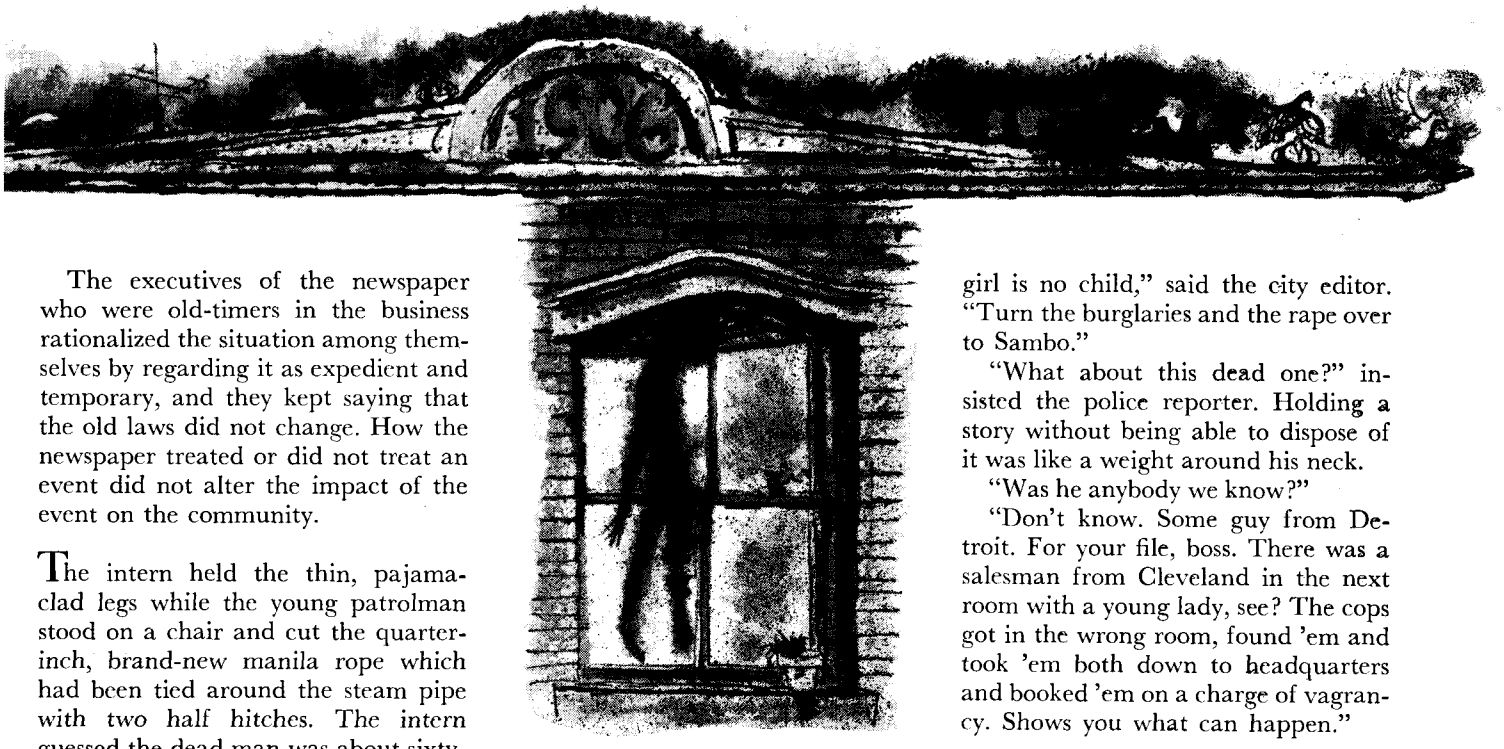

The executives of the newspaper who were old-timers in the business rationalized the situation among themselves by regarding it as expedient and temporary, and they kept saying that the old laws did not change. How the newspaper treated or did not treat an event did not alter the impact of the event on the community.

The intern held the thin, pajama-clad legs while the young patrolman stood on a chair and cut the quarter-inch, brand-new manila rope which had been tied around the steam pipe with two half hitches. The intern guessed the dead man was about sixty-five years old, and had been dead three or four hours.

They found a frayed overcoat hanging in the closet, and a new brown felt hat. Under the bed, they found a pair of creased black oxfords with white cotton socks stuffed in them. There was a white shirt frayed at the collar, but no necktie. There was an empty cloth overnight bag with the zipper open, and a blank identification card in a cellophane holder. For a few moments they were puzzled because they could not find the trousers. The hotel manager, who knew where to look, found them neatly folded underneath the mattress.

The intern tried the new hat on his head. It was too small. They carried the blanket-draped body downstairs on the aluminum stretcher, with the new felt hat riding on the dead man's chest.

"I have a dead one at the Grand Hotel," the police reporter was saying into the telephone. "I want to get it out of my hair. I got nine burglaries I gotta check out. I got a woman raped in a garage back of a pretty good address. I got some vice. I got a child abandoned in a beanery."

"How old is the child?" the city editor asked. He heard the police reporter leaf through the pile of teletyped police reports. He knew the information would be subject to the vagaries and innumerable errors of perception policemen make. These would carry over in the newspaper to be perpetuated as history.

"She's thirteen," said the reporter.

"Next case," said the city editor.

"Don't you want this here lost child?"

"In these parts a thirteen-year-old girl is no child," said the city editor. "Turn the burglaries and the rape over to Sambo."

"What about this dead one?" insisted the police reporter. Holding a story without being able to dispose of it was like a weight around his neck.

"Was he anybody we know?"

"Don't know. Some guy from Detroit. For your file, boss. There was a salesman from Cleveland in the next room with a young lady, see? The cops got in the wrong room, found 'em and took 'em both down to headquarters and booked 'em on a charge of vagrancy. Shows you what can happen."

There were only two other prisoners in the bull pen besides the salesman from Cleveland. Disheveled and anxious, he peered through the grill.

"Hey, mister," he called to the turnkey. "How can I get an attorney?"

The turnkey wasn't supposed to recommend anybody. For a maddening time, he sorted slips of paper at his roll-top desk. Then he got up and went out without looking at the prisoner.

In a little while, a slight, gray-haired man in a gray suit appeared in front of the grill and stared into the bull pen speculatively. The salesman moved along the bars.

"You want out?" said the man.

"I don't know the score here," the salesman said in a low voice. "I gotta get out or I'll lose an account. I can't have this in the papers. I gotta wife and kids at home."

"We'll get your case continued in court," said the gray suit in the manner of a man explaining an ordinary matter of daily routine. "There'll be a bond. I'll take care of that. When your case comes up in a couple of weeks or a month, you'll be represented. Okay?"

The salesman nodded with relief. He handed his business card through the grill. "I haven't got much dough on me," he said.

"Okay, okay," said the gray suit. "Your credit is okay with me, Jack."

Behind the salesman, the prisoner in

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a tan leather jacket commented in a loud voice: "Sure your credit is good, Jack. You don't get off the hook until you pay off. By the time you get through taking care of him and everybody else, you'll wish you never seen this town."

The city editor sorted out the morning art. There was a photo of a five-year-old boy in a hospital bed piled with toys. He was dying of leukemia. The neighbors had brought him toys. It was the kind of heart-warming story the paper needed.

There was a picture of a Boy Scout sitting cross-legged on the sidewalk in front of a pup tent pitched in a little plot of grass and moored to a No Parking sign. Looming in the background was an automobile salesroom whose window was masked by brown paper. "This little Scout couldn't wait to see the new Chevrolet, so he camped on the doorstep to be first in line for the grand opening tonight," said the suggested cut lines. "Ladies will receive chrysanthemums."

There was a note clipped to the print, written by the advertising salesman who covered automobile row. "Don't let me down, boy," it pleaded. The city editor put it aside. When the clamor came up from the advertising department, he could say he had to hold the photo because the Scout was not identified. It irritated him to have to find an excuse for not running a publicity picture.

In the women's section of the city jail, the girl sat huddled in her muskrat coat.

"In again, Margaret?" asked the soft-voiced police matron.

"I'm freezing," the girl complained wearily. "Why don't they turn on the heat?"

"Haven't you heard about the coal shortage, honey?"

"Say," said Margaret. "They come bustin' into the room like they was lookin' for Dillinger."

"They ain't got a right to do that," mocked the matron.

"But get it," pleaded Margaret. "Get it, will ya? It wasn't us they was lookin' for. It was some stiff hung hisself in the next room and them dumb apes bust in the wrong room."

The matron laughed.

"Why did they do us like they did?" whined the girl. Then she added quietly: "I'm freezing."

The news editor said: "I haven't got anything on the wire except coal and China. What've you got?"

"Crime," said the city editor. "They cracked nine safes last night."

"That's pretty good," said the news editor doubtfully.

"I got a rape," said the city editor. "Business girl. Dragged into a garage behind a pretty good address. Clubbed. They found her shoes in the alley."

"Maybe we can play that," said the news editor. "I tell you I haven't got a thing on the wire. Only thing is the Old Man doesn't want to play crime so much. But there isn't anything else."

The city editor felt relieved. The rape story eased the pressure of producing a salable line for the first edition.

"Let that rape run, Sambo," he told the rewrite man. "Get some reaction from the women in the Civic League."

"I already got a reaction," said Sambo. "The cops rounded up the bums in the soup line near Mercy Hospital."

"What they do that for?"

"They had to do something. The girl is well-connected. They're looking for psychopaths."

"How would the cops know a psychopath if they saw one?" demanded the city editor.

"The rape definitely looks good," he said. " 'Manhunt On.' "

"Yeah," said the news editor without enthusiasm. "But the Old Man wants to cut down on crime."

"The girl's in bad shape in the hospital," said the city editor.

"Is she close to death?"

"I don't know. Closer than most of

us, I guess. What else have you got to play? Come to notice it, you don't look so good this morning yourself."

"I feel lousy," said the news editor. "Kid kept us up half the night."

The motorman who had discovered the body arrived late at the barns. He had missed his early run and he went to the superintendent's office, filled with his story.

"You're docked half a day," the superintendent said.

"Dammit," said the motorman, "I got involved with the cops. I was walking down to catch Number Six and I seen . . ."

"I can't help it," said the superintendent. "I don't make the rules. I hadda put somebody else on. If you have a squawk, take it up with the office."

"Dammit," said the motorman, "I tell ya I couldn't help it."

"Neither can I," said the super.

"All right," said the motorman. "I'm through. I'm puttin' in for my time for the week. The hell with this job."

"Okay," said the super. "But you'll have to take it up with the office."

The hotel manager was on the phone. "Of course," he said, "you don't know me and I don't know you, but I read your paper all the time and I'm a close personal friend of . . ."

The city editor held the telephone away from his ear so that he could hear the police radio loudspeaker. Then he became aware that the hotel man had stopped talking and was waiting for a reply.

"The story hasn't come up yet," said the city editor. He had forgotten about it. "I'll see what I can do."

"Now listen," the voice came back hard. "If it gets in the paper there's going to be plenty of trouble, I guarantee you. I . . ."

"Nuts," said the city editor. He hung up and began reading copy which had been piling up in the basket for the first edition. The weather story reported the weather would be unusually warm. The Northwest Civic League was demanding a new sewer. A new Republican faction was crying "dictator" at the county chairman.

He hesitated at the local rundown on coal supplies. He called the reporter who was pinch-hitting for the man who regularly handled the situation.

"This is the same paradox we had yesterday," the city editor said. "The yards are empty, but the dealers are still selling coal. What's that mean?"

"That's what the Trade Association says," the reporter replied defensively. "I can't put words in their mouth."

"Well, why don't you tell people

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how many tons there are lying around in these empty coalyards?"

"How do I know? The association don't know."

"You mean their press agent don't know."

"I'd have to call every coalyard in town," said the reporter. "I haven't got time to do that. I got to get over to the courthouse at nine. What you need is a couple of boys to find out some facts. This is just a bunch of malarkey."

The city editor sent the malarkey over, because the news editor was calling for the local coal story.

"I just got a hot one on the wires," he said. "The Old Man thinks we ought to play it. They had a riot in a strip mine. Four guys were slugged."

The eight-column banner already was in type: VIOLENCE FLARES IN COAL FIELDS.

They were grouped around the managing editor's desk. He was reading a proof of the story. There were not many details. The press-association rewrite man who had taken the story over the telephone from a country correspondent had supplied a motive: "the right to work."

"It's pretty thin," the city editor commented.

"It's the best thing we've got," the managing editor said. "May have to revise it down for the home edition. Is there any more on it? Just four hurt?"

"Just four hurt," said the news editor. "Four guys hurt is a riot in my book."

"Sure it's a riot," said the managing editor.

"I can give you four guys hurt every day of the week," said the city editor. "I think rape's better."

"The Old Man wants to downplay crime," said the news editor. "I been telling you that. People are tired of it."

"What people?" demanded the city editor.

"I'm tired of it," said the managing editor.

"What makes violence in the coal fields any different?" asked the city editor. "It's all violence."

"Perspective. The right to work," said the managing editor.

"There's no back-to-work movement and you know it."

"I don't know anything of the kind," said the managing editor. "Here's the story. Read it. It says there was a riot

when some guys showed up to work."

"Could have been a fight over a woman," said the city editor.

The first edition went in and the building began to tremble as one press and then another rolled. The city editor felt a sense of completion when that vibration started.

When the copy boy brought the fresh papers upstairs, the city editor reread the coal story. It now had a certain authenticity it had lacked in proof. On the page it blended with other stories into a unity of violence, oddity, and pathos.

Page one seemed to present man with a bizarre and irrational picture of his doings—probably, the city editor reflected, because the reality was not sufficiently intriguing to induce him to spend a nickel to see it. Page one was compounded of a dozen unrelated events which seemed to be insignificant details in themselves, but together created a bizarre pattern that exerted a powerful attraction for that nickel.

It was not reality, it was surreality. It was another dimension, where familiar things were distorted to heighten one's awareness of them. It was a wild, erratic landscape strewn with coal miners in a combat over the right to work—or a woman, one couldn't tell; where one could buy coal out of empty coalyards; where a woman's shoes were found in an alley behind a pretty good address; where broken safes yielded an undetermined amount of cash.

Foremost among its visual stimuli was the picture of the dying child surrounded by new toys, and beside it was the Boy Scout camping on the sidewalk to be the first to see the new Chevrolet, and beneath it were three paragraphs which suggested the image of an old man hanging in the window of an old hotel, as though on display.

The managing editor was saying:

"What's that suicide doing on page one? The Old Man is raising hell. It should have been inside."

"I don't know what it's doing there," said the city editor. "I don't make up the page."

"I got a call from the manager of that hotel," said the managing editor. "He's raising hell, too—about running the name of the hotel in the story."

"I talked to him," said the city editor. "He got tough and I told him off."

"Well," said the managing editor, "I don't want any hotel manager dictating to this newspaper. But it doesn't seem as though three paragraphs is worth the fuss. The hotel guy threatens to work on us through his association. It's a lot of hot air, but is it worth fussing about?"

"Kill it out of the next edition, then," said the city editor. "It won't sell any papers around here."

"That's the only point," said the managing editor.

The city editor sat down at his desk and began to run through the photographic assignments. There was a soothing quality to the muted roar of the presses as the first edition flowed out into the city. —RICHARD LEWIS

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The *Times*—One Man's Poison

What an aroused critic would do if he were editor

The function of a newspaper, aside from making money, is to give the news to its readers thoroughly, clearly, concisely, and pleasurably. The New York *Times* is thorough, but I find its headlines ugly and hard to read; its layout inflexible and chaotic; its writing notoriously inept and long-winded, and its editing slovenly. The *Times* buries the significant news under a junkheap of useless information, and the only pleasurable part of a typical story is the last sentence.

I have no special qualifications for making this sweeping criticism of the country's most respected newspaper. Although I have edited magazines, I have never worked on a newspaper. But I think the *Times*'s defects will become evident to any one who simply stops and thinks about the paper, without being intimidated by its formidable reputation. They are mostly self-evident, and doubtless any experienced newspaperman could point out many others. The curious fact is, however, that both its editors and its readers have taken the *Times* for granted for some forty years. No one has discovered, or at least announced, that the emperor is naked. That melancholy report it falls to this article to make.

It is not just the *Times* that is journalistically pantless, of course. Most of the criticisms made below would apply also to the rest of the American daily press. Most papers present the news in a disorganized and discontinuous fashion; their editors, too, might profit greatly if they decided to Stop and Think what they are trying to do. If the *Times* is singled out here, it is because it is the country's leading paper, and because its very excellence as a *gatherer* of news brings into special relief its inadequacies as a *disseminator* of news.

This is the first of two articles presenting different reactions to the New York Times. *The second, "The* Times *—Another Man's Meat," will appear in an early issue.*

When the late Adolph Ochs took over the New York *Times* in 1896, he had a creative idea. Up to then, New York dailies had followed one of two archetypal patterns: that of Horace Greeley's high-minded *Tribune,* which crusaded for Fourierist socialism; or that of James Gordon Bennett's low-minded *Herald,* which went in for scandal and sensationalism. Ochs's idea was a paper which would be neither a political organ nor a "yellow" journal. He proposed neither to elevate nor to titillate his readers, but simply to give them "All the News That's Fit to Print." With his managing editor, Carr Van Anda, Ochs over the years created the greatest newsgathering organization in the world. Their *Times* was dullish ("Diversion for readers is not a main feature," a 1922 blurb stated complacently) and intellectually mediocre compared to Greeley's *Tribune,* Dana's *Sun,* or the *World* of the 1920's. But it did come reasonably close to living up to Ochs's slogan.

The *Times* still does. It prints more news than any other paper in the world; its foreign coverage is still unsurpassed; it is still the one indispensable newspaper source for scholars, historians—and journalists.

Unhappily, Ochs and Van Anda were much better at getting the news than they were at communicating it. This defect was more forgivable forty years ago, when the world was a simpler, or at least a more innocent, place than it is now. Today, when private and governmental sources use highly developed propaganda techniques to conceal their real aims in power-struggles of the utmost complexity, the news has, so to speak, lost its innocence. One needs more than a simple Ochsian determination to print all the "facts," if one is to avoid misleading and confusing the reader. The idea that was creative in 1896 is so no longer. The lack of critical discrimination, which in 1910 was simply a drawback in the *Times,* today has become a radical flaw which vitiates to some extent the entire paper.

Ever since Ochs gave it the first push, the *Times* has just kept rolling along, gathering lots of moss. It has become bureaucratized, routinized, set in a rigid, antiquated form that no longer serves a useful purpose. The *Times* resembles a dinosaur: an unwieldy bulk of matter directed by inadequate consciousness. Lumbering in their saurian, unreflective way along the old trail blazed by Ochs and Van Anda, the present editors appear to have given no thought to how they communicate the information they amass.

The *Times* is not edited. It just happens once a day.

In what follows, I am concerned only with journalistic technique. For the purpose of this argument, I assume the *Times* is wholly free from bias, slanting, suppression, and special-pleading. Nor am I concerned with anything but the paper's general news columns.

Within these limits, I have two main criticisms: The paper takes far too long to read for what is in it; it fails to give a clear or coherent picture of the day's news.

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To remedy these defects, I have a few modest and practical proposals.

First, the editors should edit. Most news stories in the *Times* don't appear to have been edited at all, but simply to have been set up just as the "takes" came in over the wire. In effect, every reader must be his own editor.

Consider the way the *Times* handled Truman's Economic Report to Congress. Its front-page story on January 7 begins with an inchoate summary of the report in stately, cumbrous language that requires a half to two-thirds more words than workaday English to convey the same information. Suddenly a quite different report is introduced, one not even mentioned in the headlines—that of Truman's Council of Economic Advisers. This is kicked around for a couple of turgid paragraphs, after which the story wanders back to the Truman report, but in so furtive a way that only a very alert reader can detect the transition from one to the other.

The story goes on for fifteen inches, stumbling around among statistics which should have been presented in tabular or chart form, and which make baffling reading when thrown into declarative sentences introduced by "The President added" or "Mr. Truman noted." Then back to the council's report, which is presented with equal opacity—to such an extent that the council is made to assert that "a falling price level . . . would hurt fixed-income groups." The *disjecta membra* of the council's report are spread over no less than three other stories, no more closely related in layout or typography to each other than to nearby stories on Czechoslovakia and the water shortage. Subheads might have helped matters, but the *Times* uses subheads not to clarify structure (which, to be fair, is generally quite beyond clarification), but, in a perverse way, merely to break up the type at regular intervals. This latter is a function which a black dot or just a white line could perform more effectively.

Second, the *Times* should avoid all the news that's not worth printing.

The trouble with *Pravda* as a news-reporting instrument is that it conceals practically all the news by omission. The *Times*, which prints five times as much news, keeps the facts from the public by sheer largesse. This is the *Purloined Letter* principle in journalism: Tell the reader so much that he will overlook the real point.

It is amazing how much information the *Times* prints every day that could be of no possible use or interest to any reader, not even the scholars whose peculiar requirements are made an excuse to explain away an appalling lack of editorial enterprise. This information appears for no better reason than that the *Times* has always reported the news that way, and the editors have never stopped to think why, any more than a tailor stops to think why he sews little buttons on the cuffs of men's coats. It is hard to estimate how much space (and readers' time and energy) would be saved if the *Times*'s editors did stop and think. It should certainly be in the neighborhood of twenty-five per cent.

Why must we be reinformed daily that Acheson and Eisenhower were christened Dean and Dwight respectively, and that the President of the U.N. General Assembly is a Brigadier-General whose middle initial is "P."? Why, during the weary months of the trial of the twelve Communist leaders last summer and fall, did we have to be told every morning what offense the defendants were charged with—as we have been every morning during the Hiss and Coplon trials?

In a single story (on the verdict in the Communist trial), the following useless information was given: that the

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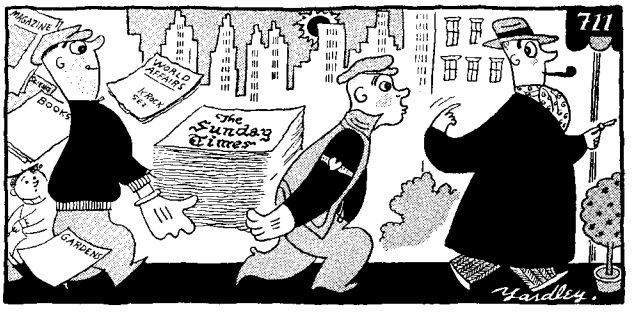
hotel where the jurors were lodged is at 120 West 45 Street; that the court adjourned at 12:35 P.M.; that the prisoners shook hands with their lawyers (instead of slugging them, as is the usual custom); and that it was a long trial (you're telling us). What does it add to an account of a radio talk by Mr. Dulles to state that it was broadcast from the Whitman Hotel, at 160-11 Eighty-ninth Avenue, Jamaica, Queens? (On the other hand, let us by all means continue to read about the fox that was captured in a Bronx housing project, the electrocuted cat that blacked out Price, Utah, and, of course, any and all items about talking fish.)



Assuming that man-bites-dog is news, and dog-bites-man is not, let us glance at three especially vapid types of *Times* reporting.

The Dog-Bites-Man Story. When the trial of the Communists ended, the *Times* revealed that among those approving the convictions were the Attorney-General of the United States and several members of the Un-American Activities Committee. Another column-length item reported that, on the one hand, Governor Dewey saw the verdict as "a vindication of [our] system," while, on the other, William Z. Foster deemed it "a body blow against our democracy."

The Man-May-or-May-Not-Bite-Dog Story. The *Times* often gives as much space to something that may (or may not) happen as to something that did happen. Thus, a story headed ROMULO HOPEFUL OF BALKANS PEACE takes ten inches to say just that, which was hardly worth noting anyway. Hopes and fears are sometimes news, but they are gaseous stuff and demand severe compression in the telling.

The Dog-Doesn't-Bite-Man Story. A fine specimen was the recent 28-inch front-page item: JOHNSON IS SILENT ON DEFENSE SHIFTS; VISITS PRESIDENT. Here, too, the headline contains "All the News That's Fit to Print." We learn that Bernard Baruch hopes the Air Force will make up with the Navy (including full text—seven inches—of his letter); that the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff held a meeting (no comment); that Johnson had met with various subordinates (listing six, with full names and titles) to hold "a general discussion of lessons to be learned from the House committee's hearings" (no comment); that Admiral Denfeld might or might not be replaced as Navy chief (no comment); and that Johnson's talk with Truman (no comment) lasted twenty minutes.

Next the *Times* should do something about its front page.

To begin with, two minor points: The headlines are printed in a type that lacks both force and refinement, that is hard to read, and that gives the front page a gray, washed-out look. It has been used at the *Times* for about forty years, and it would probably be no more difficult to persuade the editors to change it than to get the Pope to revise the mass.

Like other papers, the *Times* begins each story with a lead paragraph, summarizing, for the hasty reader, the story. This is a sensible practice, but why not set the lead in boldface to make it easier to find—or to skip? Also the two or three banks of subheadlines under the main headlines serve no purpose, since the information they give is at once repeated in the lead just below them. Why not drop them? Some of the inches thus saved could be used to expand the lead into a more adequate summary than it now is.

But the great trouble with the *Times* front page lies much deeper than typography: It is made up according to a false theory of news. In this, as in most of its other flaws, the *Times* is no more culpable than many other American newspapers.

"The best news judgment of the newspaper's staff," writes an editor of the *Times*, in *The Newspaper, Its Making and Its Meaning*, "will be concentrated on the make-up of page one. On it will be displayed the news that the editors think most significant and important to its readers. . . . The flow of news is never even . . . so a story may find itself decorating page one one day that would be inside on another." This blandly unconscious statement, written with true *Times* felicity (note the ingenious "one one" construction) could hardly be improved on. Granted that the important news should be on page one, the question arises: important in relation to what? To the continuity of the news? Or to the other news of that particular day? The former would seem the more valid criterion; we don't evaluate each day separately, as though we were newborn that morning, but rather we fit its events into a remembered continuum of past days. A fetishist of the immediate might be fascinated by the special physiognomy of today, but more normal readers presumably don't change their opinion of, say, the opening of a dog show just because a paucity of news that particular morning has made it relatively important. Since "the flow of news is never even," this inflation of minor items must often take place if the one-day-only criterion of importance is used. Nevertheless, it is precisely this absurd criterion that the *Times*, like other American dailies, does use in making up its front page.

The result is confusing. Often it takes a scholarly investigation to discover what, if anything, of importance has happened—though one might think an elementary function of a front page would be to make this clear at a glance. The confusion comes from the fact that the editors of the *Times* use one criterion of importance (this-day-only) while the readers use another (many-days).

The *Times*'s front-page formula is simple: an average of a dozen slots into which are inserted the dozen most important stories of the day. Since the slots must always be filled, obviously some of the time they are filled with trivia. This inflexibility produces monotony as well as confusion. The really big stories do get some emphasis by larger headlines, it is true. But the bulk of any morning's front page is taken up with petty or

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routine items all masquerading in the same costume (the one-column head) as front-page news. So the dramatic impact of the front page is dribbled away, and from an esthetic or a utilitarian standpoint, the formula is a failure.

The difficulty is a theoretical, indeed a philosophical, one. Although their paper is ironically named the *Times,* the editors are insensitive to time, which in a journalist is like a piano tuner's being slightly deaf. Their "this-day-only" criterion of importance is really a timeless concept, since it lifts each day out of the context of preceding days (that is, out of the "time-continuum," "the stream of history") and treats it as a separate entity, to be fitted into a rigid twelve-slot formula.

As Bergson shows in his little essay, *An Introduction to Metaphysics,* which should be on every newspaper editor's desk, our scientifically-hypnotized culture finds it easier to think in space than in time terms. Whether Bergson is right or not in claiming that the nature of reality can be grasped better through time-concepts like change and duration than through space-concepts, I think it will be granted that the *Times,* like all other newspapers, has a peculiarly intimate relation to time, both in structure (its issues are related to each other by their dates) and in function ("news" is after all simply the plural of "new"). Thus, Bergson's difficult art of time-thinking would seem to be essential for a newspaperman. Unfortunately, few of them have mastered it; confirmed and quite unconscious space-thinkers, they almost universally adapt time (the flow of news) to space (the rigid layout).

What is needed is a theory of the front page which will be just the reverse of that of the *Times*—one that will allow the ever-changing stream of events to reshape the layout each day. This means above all flexibility: a layout that will "breathe," contracting and expanding as required to fit each day's different needs, one that will shout about big things and whisper about small things, one that will make clear the continuity of news.

This could be done in various ways. Here is one: The important news (over many days, not this day only) could be treated the way the whole front page is now treated: each story played up by itself with emphatic headlines. This section could extend as far down the page as the quantity and quality of such news justifies. Some days, the whole page might be given to it; other days, there might be no really important news, in which case there would be no big headlines at all; on the average, such news would perhaps fill the top half of the front page. The rest, typographically distinct and separated by a white space or a line, is devoted to the lesser news stories. These are departmentalized; each story has its own headline, but the stories are grouped

according to subject instead of being, as is now the practice, strewn through the paper according to some esoteric whim of the layout man. There are two kinds of departments: the general, or permanent, ones, such as the news weeklies now have ("Labor," "Local Politics," "England," etc.); and *ad hoc* headings to mark special events that develop over many days ("Hiss Trial," "Tito vs. Stalin," etc.). These department headings could be typographically bold and simple—perhaps a reverse-plate block; they should be flags stuck up to guide the reader through the news columns. Their aim, and the aim of the departments themselves (which of course would extend from the front page all the way back through the paper), would be to make it easier for each reader to find the special topics he is interested in, instead of having, as is now the case, to read every headline in the paper and to rustle through every page to make sure he is not missing something.

This layout would *emphasize,* instead of (as the present one does) concealing, the continuity of the news.

In five issues of the *Times* chosen at random, I found that almost two out of every three front-page stories were continued from the preceding day, week, or month; such stories as the Tito-Stalin conflict, the steel and coal strikes, and the Air Force-Navy row had been appearing on the front page almost every day for weeks. But just as the editors of the *Times* isolate each day's issue from its time-context, so they treat each installment of one of these continuous stories as a completely separate item. It is as if they thought each issue, and each story, was read by a wholly different set of readers. So the same facts are repeated over and over; the same basic story is told anew each morning. There is, of course, some discontinuity in readers: Each issue has occasional new readers, attracted by some special feature, such as Lieutenant General Smith's excellent series on Russia; and regular readers sometimes miss or skip issues. (Some mornings one just doesn't feel up to wrestling with the *Times.*) But there should be a happy medium between giving no background at all and running each installment as a totally new story.

The present *Times* layout conceals, in short, the two main characteristics of the news: change and continuity. The rigid front page cannot expand or contract enough to fit the ever-changing flow of news. The isolation of each day's installment of a many-day story breaks the continuity that ties events together; the proposed treatment would reveal this continuity.

It is true that these proposals would be more difficult to carry out than the present formula. But why should the readers do *all* the work on the *Times*?

—Dwight Macdonald

Same-Day Service

Berlin, Dec. 29: The Communist *Nacht Express* said: "Those who do not see that German reconstruction is possible only if we depend on our own strength and friendship with the Soviet Union must disappear from the political life of the German republic."

Berlin, Dec. 29: The newspaper *Abend* reported that Erich Baumann, one of five Liberal Democratic members of the Brandenburg legislature, had disappeared.

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War of Wits in Washington

How the bloodless battle between press and government is waged in the shadowy areas of 'intelligence' and 'counter-intelligence'

Of all the bloodless battles currently being waged in Washington, the least publicized and most persistent is the guerrilla activity between the government and the press, stemming from their divergent notions about how much public business should actually be public.

Like most other wars, this one is being fought both in the open—the field of straight reporting—and in the shadowy, secret area of espionage and counter-intelligence. At the front, the moves and countermoves are standard, and perfectly understood by both sides. Newspapermen and bureaucrats operate directly against one another—through questions and answers, denials, insistence, double-talk, amplification, and confirmation.

The planning and maneuvering in the secret war are a good deal more elaborate. Operations on both sides are executed by echelons which shun the day-to-day combat of the press conference and the formal interview in favor of stratagem, wile, and innuendo.

In the Second World War, Lisbon was the meeting ground for secret and semi-secret agents of both sides. In the press-government war, Lisbon is often the dinner table. At it the official and the reporter sound each other out, in a friendly but guarded manner. The official fears being led into an indiscretion; the reporter fears that a story may be planted on him. Both have reason enough to be wary. Worthy of study is the food-and-drink technique employed by a celebrated radio and newspaper commentator who maintains a delightful old house in Georgetown. Mint juleps in the garden in summer, and cozy dinners before open fires in winter, keep newsworthy personages streaming through his doors. Some competitors claim that the officials come because they are afraid not to; whether or not this is true, the cuisine, atmosphere, and assortment of guests are all enticements to the tired bureaucrat.

Days later, perhaps, the government man may realize that a careless remark of his has provided the tip for a violent attack on a colleague or a personal friend.

Less often, when one official conducts a spirited defense of a colleague who is under fire, the host may take up the cudgels in the latter's behalf. David E. Lilienthal, the retiring chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, has for years been the beneficiary of support acquired in this manner.

Approval by a columnist is, of course, not always pure gold for the recipient. When Kenneth C. Royall was Secretary of the Army, he once complained, only half jokingly, that a certain commentator had said nothing bad about him lately. "If he ever says anything good about me," Mr. Royall said, "I will pack my bags and go home to Raleigh." This particular columnist had just been characterized by the President with a reference to the initials of the Senate Office Building.

Another syndicated observer, a bachelor, has little trouble keeping his Georgetown house interestingly filled with Men of Distinction. His specialty is the small stag dinner, with excellent food, old port, and other niceties. This reporter keeps up with inside data given by Washington bigwigs to prominent foreign visitors simply by having the foreigners to dinner, and, over the brandy, adroitly guiding them onto the topics they have discussed with government officials. The guests are naturally careful to avoid any breach of confidence, so this technique requires a good knowledge of Washington political background and the ability to make reasonable deductions.

Usually, intelligence and counter-intelligence operations are less devious. A favorite spot for press reconnaissances used to be the Metropolitan, one of

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Washington's better men's clubs, until it began to be frequented by too many top-ranking men from the State and Treasury Departments, as well as from other mid-town government agencies. Before long, they started tracing "leaks" by noting who was having lunch with whom, and the place fell into disfavor.

Table talk is not always initiated by reporters. Most Cabinet officers have private dining rooms close to their offices, which they use for off-the-record luncheons with the press. Louis Johnson fairly often holds luncheons at which he gives small, picked groups of journalists the background of a given situation and answers questions about it. The understanding is that any information printed will not be attributed to an official source.

Of all the ruses employed in the battle of information, the most insidious are probably the tips of designing officials who want to build newsprint bonfires under colleagues. When a reporter gets a tip of this nature, he always finds it hard to decide whether he is being used or has merely acquired a piece of suppressed news. Recent recipients of this form of journalistic hotfoot have included Major Gen. Harry Vaughan, Secretary Johnson, and Julius ("Cap") Krug, former Secretary of the Interior.

Aside from the victims themselves, the greatest sufferer from such attacks is the public, which is apt to be misled in its judgments of its leading servants and of national policies. An ugly by-product is the suspicion and cynicism which recurrent smears inject into relations between highly placed officials, whose energies might be applied to something more constructive than watching out for knives in the back.

Although the guerrilla war in Washington has its seamy side, it has undoubtedly contributed to making Americans better informed about their public business than the citizens of any other large country.

Some of us combat-men on the press side get discouraged at times, however. I think I am at my gloomiest when I hear a contestant on a radio quiz show lose ten thousand dollars because he doesn't know the name of the Attorney-General, or how many Senators come from each state.

—Harold B. Hinton

LIFE . . .

Scoreboard in the Sky

In 1941, *Life* decided that photographs, captions, and miscellaneous features were not enough. The magazine, whose technical perfection has long been internationally envied and imitated, began to expound its editorial opinions. Ever since, *Life* has led two lives: It has maintained its interest in slumber parties and flagpole sittings, but, moved by a new missionary instinct, it has used its vast circulation to distribute a Message.

On February 17, 1941, Henry R. Luce started off with a signed editorial, "The American Century." Despite the fact that the United States was not yet in the war, he wrote that "America and only America can effectively state the war aims of this war." "Are we going to fight for dear old Danzig or dear old Dong Dang?" he asked. "Are we going to decide the boundaries of Uritania?"

"The trouble is not with the facts," Luce declared. "The trouble is that clear and honest inferences have not been drawn from the facts. The day-to-day present is clear. The issues of tomorrow are befogged." He failed then to realize, as *Life* has failed ever since, that it is just because the present is made to appear so clear that the issues of tomorrow are befogged.

Since the editorial on the American Century, *Life*'s political thinking has been moving in two opposite directions: In it, Luce attacked the American welfare state ("a whole generation of young people trained to look to the Government . . .") ; but he favored an American Welfare Globe ("We must undertake now to be the Good Samaritan of the entire world."). He knew that isolationism was madness; he substituted "a truly *American* internationalism"—an expression about as clear as monogamous polygamy or black whiteness. He made today's Point Four appear trifling ("all that we cannot eat . . . should forthwith be dispatched to the four quarters of the globe as a free gift, administered by a humanitarian army of Americans . . .") ; but he also stood up for free trade and enterprise without fearing that charitable giving and profitable selling might clash. He opposed planning at home, but hinted that mankind everywhere was waiting for an American master plan.

On December 22, 1941, after Pearl Harbor, Luce provided another piece entitled "The Day of Wrath," declaring war and a new epoch. "We *will* learn," he wrote. "Every American, not excepting Mr. Roosevelt, now faces the deepest necessity of his life—the necessity of learning that he must find a spiritual rebirth or lose his soul alive . . . we are the principal trustees in this century of a great heritage of human freedom under God. And therefore we must have victory. . . . We have common military interests with Russia and the chance to build a new bridge between a changing Russia and a changing West."

Luce's contributions contained the first indications of *Life*'s concern with American "trusteeship" as well as general soul-saving and -searching; they sparked the first flicker of *Life*'s blindly optimistic vision of a one-world, Russo-American honeymoon; they defined nothing rigidly, least of all the changes occurring in the East and the West; and they managed to suggest that something was rotten in the state of Roosevelt.

Some time elapsed before *Life* took another critical look—on February 15,

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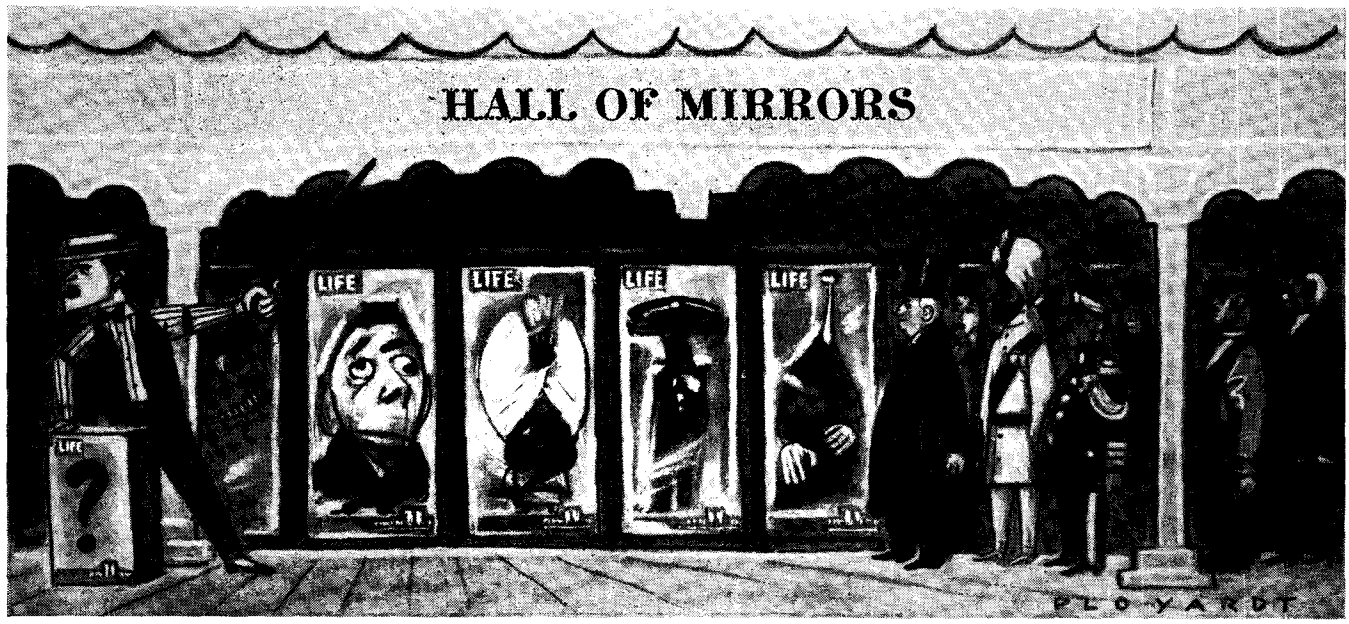

1943—at the way things were going. "The Time Is Now," was its headline, and in slightly smaller print it asked: "Are We Winning The War—Or Are We Losing It?" The answers to both questions were the same: "maybe yes . . . maybe no." *Life* went on to warn of the possibilities of a negotiated peace and to call for unity, "which alone will ensure that victory will be what we Americans mean it to be." In closing, all this was described as a "challenge to American statesmanship."

On March 22, 1943, under the heading "Cowboy Diplomacy," the need for statesmanship was once more taken up. *Life* was frankly furious at the State Department for playing ball with Franco Spain and for setting up a "five-ring fascist circus" in North Africa.

"Sometimes the plain man may be pardoned for feeling that, in the light of the State Department's idea of 'self-interest,' the most practical policy so far suggested is Mr. Wallace's Christianity—milk bottles and all," said the editorial. Somewhere between the devil and the angels, *Life* took an undefined position. It wound up with a call to action that was soon to become familiar to the constant reader: "There are too many foreign policies—everybody has one except the U. S. . . . Let's go."

On March 29, 1943, *Life* devoted a complete issue to Russia. On the editorial page, it expressed some quiet misgivings about Soviet censorship, but added quickly that considering "what the U.S.S.R. has accomplished in the twenty years of its existence we can make allowances" and that "probably the attitude to take toward [censorship] is not to get too excited about it." In the same issue the NKVD was charitably defined as "a national police similar to the FBI." Another caption shrugged off the cost of farm collectivization "in terms of human life and individual liberty" by concluding: "The historic fact is that it worked." Like many well-meaning American liberals, the magazine tended to get its liberal idealism tangled up with its pragmatic admiration of efficiency.

At any rate, *Life* was determined to make friends with our Russian ally. In so deciding, it dropped dark hints that sinister forces in Washington were not in accord with this benevolent undertaking. "There are two ways by which nations can come close together; one is through their State Departments, the other is through popular sympathy and understanding," the editorial declared. "The editors of *Life* can't do anything about the U. S. State Department. We can, however, help our readers to see and understand the Russian people."

When the first indications of a break between the London Polish government and the U.S.S.R. appeared a few months later, in May, 1943, *Life* sided with the Russians. It said that "the break was bound to come," most pre-war Polish governments were "semi-fascist" anyway, and as for the Russians' lack of "diplomatic manners," it struck *Life* as being "discouraging" but "refreshing." Whatever conflicts of interest might exist between the United States and Russia, "the Polish border is not one of them" and "our diplomats ought not to get too huffy in backing up the Poles."

Five weeks later, *Life* added that Russia was no longer a dark and backward land, that, despite its ignorance of the principles of freedom, it had "adopted many aims in common with ours" and would, after the war, "have a big influence." It seemed to the editors then that the United States was worried because it had a "confused state of mind" about national interests. They did their best to clear up the confusion. "The editors of *Life*," they concluded, "believe that the national interest of this country is extremely broad," and they refused to narrow it down by defining it.

The voice of *Life* has kept changing as the scene has changed over the years, but on no subject have its feelings shifted more violently than on Germany.

In February, 1943, the editors proclaimed the goal: "We promised ourselves that *this time* we would so thoroughly finish the job that 'this' could never happen again—not, at any rate, for a long, long time." In fact *Life* felt so strongly about the Germans that in July, 1942, it declared in a caption that nothing short of the death penalty

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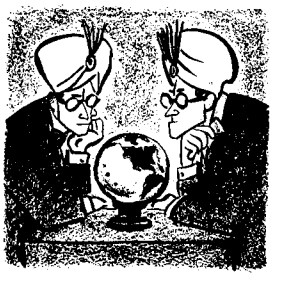
for eight Nazi saboteurs would satisfy patriotic Americans. Four years later, on November 11, 1946, the editors acclaimed " 'Our Germans' " as happily reformed democrats. "The ballot itself is the best educator in democracy, and . . . the way to learn to swim is to jump in the water, however cold," *Life* commented, paraphrasing General Clay and ignoring the possibility of drowning. The editors were impressed by the fact that the German election turnout was proportionately larger than any American turnout. They quoted an admiring U. S. Army lieutenant as saying that Germans stood in line to vote as good democrats while Americans were standing in line for nylon stockings. The Germans, in fact, had been "stricter and certainly more discriminating denazifiers than we were."

Behind us, *Life* discovered a year or so later, lay Yalta "with its deal to give Poland the only part of Germany that had a food surplus." (On February 26, 1945, *Life* had called the Yalta Conference "a success.") Behind us, too, was the occupation order, "with its over-emphasis on denazification." Germany had to be proclaimed the "outpost of democracy"; a "soft" policy now was "assuredly the Christian thing" and "likewise the practical thing . . . however much the Communists and fellow travelers among us scream."

On August 29, 1949, *Life* published a statement by the new German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, alongside its own editorial. Adenauer said that Germany is "of the West"; that the German people "have grown up politically"; and that they have shown this by voting for "the parties of the center." The foreign correspondents, he added, had been mistaken in giving importance to the nationalistic undercurrents. On the opposite page the editors agreed heartily, and assured themselves that the German election did not constitute a drift to the "fascist 'right' " because "Europeans are taking certain values implied by the adjective 'Christian' with high seriousness." The German Christian Democrats were utterly safe, and "the point about Western Europe today is that religion has interpenetrated with politics in such a way that people have been voting for humane values and good men, not for hard-and-fast economic philosophies." The Christian Democrats, *Life* said, had been valiant in opposing the encroachments of "statism." About three months later the Christian Democratic Administration clamped an airtight governmental censorship on all its servants.

Life's position might be called "sound" by those who liked the Weimar Republic. It could not possibly be called revolutionary. But about a month later, on December 12, 1949, *Life* ended a dissertation on German rearmament — something it believed would eventually be bound to happen —on this cryptic note: "But Americans must understand, better than they have as yet been given to understand, the enormous revolution of European life and habits involved. Nowhere in Western Europe is this more true than in Germany. There the revolution must be total." Presumably the banner of total revolution which the editors are rallying behind is that of Konrad Adenauer.

All in all, *Life*, in its running battle with the German problem, seems to have listened to many voices and repeated all it heard, including some references, which seem oddly out of place, to German aggressiveness and menacing cartels. The final impression is that, behind the camouflage of resolute calls for valiant deeds, the editors, like most American liberals, mean well but don't give themselves time to think. *Life* has practically admitted as much. "Editors don't like to be confused any more than anybody else does," it said, on February 15, 1943. "When we are, which is more often than we like to admit, we try not to confuse our readers by our own confusion. So the newspapers and *Life* try to make everything as simple as possible. But this doesn't prevent the people from being confused." Of course it doesn't. Perhaps the reason is that by simplifying rather than clarifying the issues, *Life* makes them even more confusing. The trouble is, to quote Luce's first editorial, that "clear and honest inferences have not been drawn from the facts." *Life*'s pursuit of a "foreign policy" is marked by resounding calls for "clarity." But a call for clarity is no substitute for clarity.



On March 6, 1944, *Life* said: "The peace and good of Europe require . . . more than a police force, whether the police force is the United Nations or not. They require an idea on the scale of that age-old dream, the United States of Europe. . . . That kind of peace is the American interest in Europe." But on August 7, *Life* decided to settle for another panacea, "World 'Realism,' 1944." This policy included restoration of the British Empire, a France "run" by de Gaulle "if that is what France wants," and a Europe "that will behave itself properly toward the U.S.S.R." This last element was based on *Life*'s specific insight into Russian aims. "Now Stalin's position," the editors said, "seems to be perfectly clear—despite tendencies over here to view it as uncertain. Stalin is very serious about wanting friendship with Great Britain and the U. S. . . . Indeed, he very likely wants most of Europe to be under 'democratic' governments—with communists included here and there but not running things."

From this analysis *Life* concluded that all countries knew what to do except the United States, and warned that America "ought to know the score. The score need not be thought discouraging; it is simply the score. . . . Once the score is generally understood, America's progress toward . . . participation in the organization of peace will be much faster."

This happy formula—"knowing the score"—has since become a favorite expression on *Life*'s editorial page. It would be a great help to the reader if he were ever told what the score is, or even what game is being played.

Beginning in January, 1947, and continuing for two consecutive issues, *Life* undertook another examination of U. S. foreign policy and concluded that "any modern statesman worthy of the name must have a vision of world government, and a near vision at that"; that "Europe's old pattern must be replaced, and it is within the power of American leadership to help do it"; that American businessmen should "go as wealth-creators—as good capitalists" and "make converts for their system"; and that "this is the special destiny of America in the next decade: to break the old patterns, to share not

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its wealth but its talent for creating wealth, to help the world breathe freely once again." By early 1949, *Life* had detected a definite improvement in America's knowledge of the score. "It is time for Europeans to assume," the editors wrote, "that Americans know the score and will do the job." *Life* later (September 12, 1949) proclaimed with confidence: "We believe that the new world of the 20th Century can be a good and well-ordered world."

Over the years, it would seem that *Life*, like the Red Queen, has had to run at breath-taking speed merely to keep in the same place. But sometimes it manages to give the impression of standing still when it has actually moved a long way. On August 19, 1946, *Life* said: "What the Jews really need is not a national state but the right sort of world." It decided: ". . . [This] would do far more to solve the Jewish problem than any multiplication of the Jewish population in Palestine." "Yes," *Life* said ringingly on February 28, 1949, "the Jews needed a homeland and Palestine was the place where the homeland should be reconstituted. . . ."

On this, as on other occasions, *Life*, having weathered the battle of idealism, diplomacy, and expediency without retreat or retraction, bravely brought up the rear of public opinion and joined in the popular approval of a *fait accompli*.

On some issues, however, *Life* has stuck to its guns, even after the barrels had worn out. Such an issue was China. *Life* began with an intense admiration of Madame Chiang Kai-shek's speech to Congress, which led the editors to express the hope, on March 1, 1943, that "the founding fathers of the Republic were present" when "this beautiful woman, clad in black and ornamented with flawless jade" made her appeal.

The editors reeled temporarily under a detailed dispatch on the corruption of the Chinese nationalists sent by *Life*'s (then) China correspondent, Theodore White, and the editorial warned: ". . . the U. S. cannot ignore the fact that if China's government should become a fascistic, power-hungry, repressive, landlords'-and-usurers' government, it is all too likely to get into trouble with Russia. . . . Under no circumstances would the American people ever wish to be embroiled with the Soviet Union in a struggle in which they would feel politically on the wrong side."

But by November 13, 1944, *Life* had made up its mind to stick to China, come hell and Formosa. The editors called it "highly unwise to meddle in China's [internal affairs] just now." They maintained that "a government that is seeking unity against heavy odds is not likely to use its energies for widespread internal reforms." On April 5, 1948, *Life* even scolded Senator Vandenberg for giving "a wholly gratuitous lecture to the Chinese government" and spoke approvingly of Senator Taft, who "goes so far as to opine that Marshall & Co. will never handle China right 'because Marshall does not like the Chinese and has no interest in their problems.' "

Life concluded its 1948 comment with a stern "Let them look to it" to Marshall & Co., and it has not budged from that stand since.

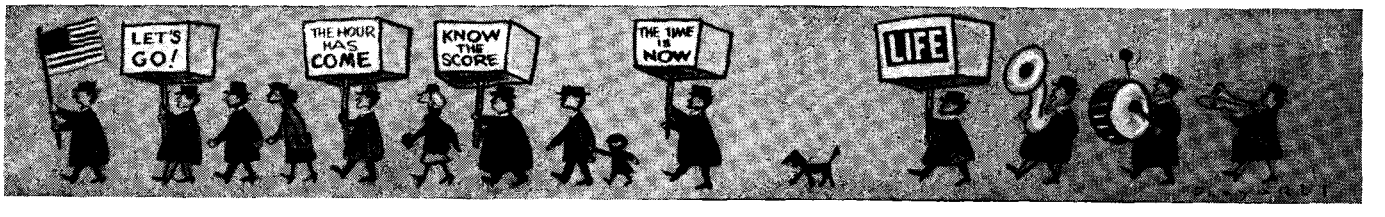
It has, however, budged mightily from its judgment of subversion in the State Department and of subversion in general. In August, 1943, *Life* blamed the State Department for seeming to "pop up on the wrong side, with the Fascists [in Spain]" and charged that "we have failed to find even a satisfactory basis of negotiation with Russia."

By the middle of 1944 the editors saw America and Russia as "a natural pincers against anyone who disturbs the world's peace." In September of 1945 it had mellowed to the point of admitting: "Many charges are leveled against the Department of State, not all of them accurate or fair. There is little basis for the contradictory charges that it is filled on the one hand with 'leftists,' who would drag us after the Russian chariot, or with 'rightists' conspiring to uphold Franco in Spain or Perón in Argentina."

Contradictory and baseless those charges may have been, but keeping its editorial hand on the nation's pulse and generally knowing the score, *Life* on January 10, 1949, came up with a new estimate of an old situation. "During the period when we were losing our shirts at Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam," the voice, which had been quite enthusiastic about those conferences in the past, now said, "the fellow travelers sat at many a little State Department desk labeled with the name of this or that country or region." And a week later *Life* welcomed Secretary of State Dean Acheson to his new office by darkly recalling that he had once belonged to the "be soft to Russia" group while "a member of his law firm had acted for the Communist government of Poland."

In all this enlightened hindsight there is little, if any, malice. Judging from the record of *Life*'s editorials, the charges of "reaction" and "fascist-mindedness" sometimes leveled at it are quite unearned. Indeed, when noble liberal causes can be supported without thought and conflict—generous admission of displaced persons, and justice for the American Negro are two examples—*Life* speaks with that warmth of heart which is typical of the best of America.

Unfortunately, the editors find it hard to live up to their high ideals. The voice must speak to millions every Friday, and it must be loud and firm. What is it to say if the world picture of yesterday looks as obsolete today as that full-page picture of a love-struck Shirley Temple gazing into the eyes of her bridegroom? Why should *Life*, simplifying the honeymoons and hatreds of today, take time to consider the possible divorces and reconciliations of tomorrow? How is the voice to achieve finality on moral principles when it is confused by a picture caption (*Life*, August 16, 1943) lauding the



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Japanese Army as "pure-minded" because no pin-up girls were permitted in its barracks, only a week after an admiring picture spread of twenty-three U. S. service pin-ups, including "The Girl We'd Like to Submerge With?"

For *Life*'s editors, perched high in the sky where only the most piercing expressions of public opinion are audible and only the vaguest outlines of world politics are visible, never doubt for a moment that there is "a correct answer" to every problem. This answer is a compound of now is the time to know the score, and the hour has come to wise up and get going. On the international scene this policy is best expressed in the concluding lines of the editorial of May 10, 1948: "What is needed, and badly needed, is a great and constructive idea which can come off paper. Our mood is ripe for great change, and the state of the world demands it. . . . It is time for our statesmen to take a long view of the future, to make large plans for America's role, to be unafraid of great changes, indeed, to give them shape." With the American Century in its ninth year, *Life* is even cloudier about its meaning than when it began.

Actually, of course, *Life* is neither as Olympian as its editors may be led to believe by the sound of their own words nor as sinister as its enemies try to paint it. *Life* detests the devil because it is well-intentioned. Not only that, it is cocksure it can defeat him. The only thing it is not quite certain about is the nature of the battle, which sometimes leads it to fire wildly in all directions, caring more for the brilliance of the fireworks than for the impact on the target.

The mystery of *Life* is easily dispelled, and never more disarmingly than when the editors fall into one of their infrequent moments of introspection: "Here is a problem for all the press, not excluding *Life*," they mused on December 19, 1949. "How to use the mind? How to exercise the duty and power of choice without 'suppressing' or 'distorting' the news? These are hard questions that nobody has completely answered. All concerned . . . will do well to ponder the problem, and in particular to re-examine a system which all too often allows no pause for reflection and examination . . ."

—Fred M. Hechinger

The *Sun* Goes Down

New York moved out from under the old paper while it kept revolving in its standpat heaven

For the press, the sale last month of the 116-year-old New York *Sun* to an afternoon rival, Scripps - Howard's New York *World-Telegram*, was a summons to an ancient ritual. "Respectable" journals from coast to coast mourned the passing of a "great" newspaper, killed (so its owner said) by the mounting demands of labor unions, and in the same breath rejoiced over the posthumous partnership of four such journalistic giants as Charles A. Dana, Joseph Pulitzer, James Gordon Bennett, Jr., and E. W. Scripps, no one of whom would recognize the latest "heir" by the slightest feature. In sharp contrast, as always, the "liberal" organs and pundits took up a dirge long since made familiar by Upton Sinclair, Oswald Garrison Villard, and Morris Ernst: One paper dead plus one paper bigger plus one chain more powerful equals another beating for the American people.

With the reticence that more and more often seems to get in the way of their first duty, which is to inform, the publishers declined to probe very deeply into the *Sun's* fatal malady. They have a gentlemen's agreement to refrain from saying anything mean about each other, and besides, some of the mourners may not have been feeling any too robust themselves. So the story was made to seem too important (for the wrong reasons) to some Americans, and too unimportant (because the right reasons never got into print) to the rest.

The *Sun* died of a number of ailments, among which high labor costs was one, but obviously not the only nor the overriding one, since all of the surviving 1,768 daily newspapers in the United States have to contend with precisely the same factor.

When the *Sun* was founded in 1833, a man could launch a newspaper in New York with a few thousand dollars and, as the cliché had it, "a case [apronful] of battered type." He could sell it to fifteen or twenty thousand readers at a cent a copy, solicit advertisements when he had time, and make money. Thomas W. Dewart, the last of the *Sun's* several publishers, stepped into a going concern with the best and latest mechanical equipment, an adequate staff that included three or four world-famous specialists, more than 280,000 passionately faithful readers, and (though it was already beginning to slip) an almost legendary belief among advertisers that the *Sun* was the best afternoon medium through which to reach the conservative reader. When Dewart quit, he had more than 270,000 readers at five cents a copy and, although he had lost 1.5 million lines in 1949, still so much advertising that he needed only a dozen staff men and a handful of columnists to fill up the unsold interstices. Why wasn't it enough?

The answer might begin with increased (and ever-increasing) publishing costs. Newsprint, of which the *Sun* consumed about four hundred tons a week, had shot up to a hundred dollars a ton from the forty-eight it fetched as recently as 1939. The best press Dana ever owned cost him less than a hundred thousand dollars; Dewart's battery (which Howard did not buy) might well be appraised at around three million. Dana paid some eighty employees an average of less than twenty-five dollars a week; De-

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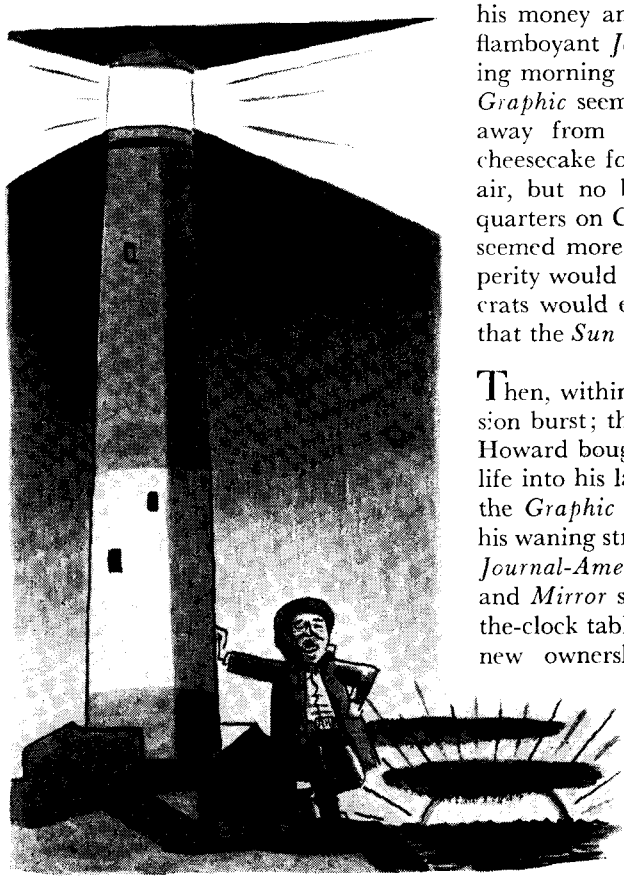
wart was paying twelve hundred an average of more than seventy-five.

This change in newspaper economics is perhaps even more graphic if put into terms of the relative importance of circulation pennies and advertising dollars. Up to very near the end of the last century, the generally accepted formula was that the readers' coins paid for newsprint and production (including amortization of mechanical equipment), and advertisers' checks for everything else (including, obviously, the cost of providing news and entertainment, which has risen more sharply than anything else). Nowadays the formula is very different. It cost Tom Dewart close to twenty cents to produce a paper which retailed for a nickel. (It costs the New York *Times* about a dollar to produce a Sunday edition that sells for fifteen cents.)

So over the last fifty years, the relative positions of the readers and the advertisers as targets of publisher charm and enterprise have been reversed. This has somehow mesmerized a few publishers into the comfortable illusion that advertising is a miraculous, buoyant substance that can keep not only its own bulk but also that of the circulation afloat—i. e., that people would buy a newspaper day after day just to see what Macy's was up to. This illusion is sometimes accompanied by another: that people, especially conservative suburbanites, do not change much over the years; and that a publisher who once manages to achieve success with a magic *mélange* of folksy features, partisan editorials, Associated Press tidbits, and department-store specials has only to coast along forever on the momentum.



"Irresistible momentum" was the catch-phrase of the 1920's, when the *Sun* hung high in the publishing sky, golden-bright if not very warming. Republicans of the Coolidge and Hoover stripe gave the *Sun,* which had absorbed the *Globe,* a flourishing clientele, and the fullness of their vigor obscured the sober actuarial statistic that most of them were pretty old. The *Evening World,* relic of Wilsonian internationalism, was dying, along with its morning elder brother. The *Evening Post* appeared daily as the ghost of a long-vanished genteel tradition. The amorphous *Telegram* had eaten the sprightly *Mail* without being visibly nourished. Hearst was still dividing his money and attention between the flamboyant *Journal* and the floundering morning *American.* The overripe *Graphic* seemed to be turning readers away from the whole tabloid-*cum*-cheesecake formula. Death was in the air, but no bells tolled in the *Sun's* quarters on Chambers Street. Nothing seemed more unlikely than that prosperity would ever end, that the Democrats would ever elect a President, or that the *Sun* would ever set.

Then, within a few years, the depression burst; the New Deal began; Roy Howard bought the *World* to breathe life into his lately-acquired *Telegram*; the *Graphic* folded; Hearst threw all his waning strength behind the merged *Journal-American*; the *Daily News* and *Mirror* surged forward as round-the-clock tabloids; and the *Post,* under new ownership, followed the Pied Piper of Hyde Park. The *Sun,* joining piously in obsequies for the fallen, could not conceal its smug conviction that on the whole it had profited. The Dewarts failed to note that into the common grave with familiar mastheads had gone several outworn social-political shibboleths, some consumer tastes, and quite a few *Sun* readers whose hour had struck.

Why look for dead bones, when the manna covered the ground like snow? This fellow Howard seemed as leftish as the Pulitzer sheet he had helped do in. "Off the rocks with Landon and Knox!" the *Sun* cried confidently, and there was not another afternoon paper in New York to cash in on pure Republicanism. In 1936, the *Sun* had its biggest circulation year: over 300,000. Advertising boomed. Howard of the slowly-climbing *World-Telegram* came hat-in-hand to see if the Dewarts would like to chip in with him, buy up the *Post,* and put it out of its misery. They would not. Let the "radicals" split their field; a paper with the Old Guard behind it had only to wait.

But the earth continued to move, while the *Sun* stood still. The G.O.P. was making an attempt to start a new life with Willkie; not so the *Sun.* Howard lured Hugh Johnson, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Tom Stokes to the *World-Telegram.* The Dewarts stood pat with H. I. Phillips, Rube Goldberg, and its annual reprint of an old editorial about Santa Claus. Howard began beating the tabloids with picture spreads of missing co-eds, shapely actresses, and Long Island divorce raids. The *Sun* wasted a Pulitzer Prize reporter on waterfront crime. Howard embraced the New Deal philosophy and sniped at nearly all its authors on personal grounds, thus garnering readers on both sides of the street. In the *Sun,* Phelps Adams and George Sokolsky continued to blast at a way of life long since accepted by the vast majority of Americans. It became merely a question of how long readers addicted to Herbert Hoover, the Toonerville Trolley, and stamp-collecting would hold out. The Dewarts never got it through their heads that a publication that allows itself to become the mouthpiece of any one small group is doomed to decline as that group declines.

So Tom Dewart sold his "intangibles" (name, circulation, and good will), for a very secret sum estimated at anywhere from $2,000,000 to $3,500,000, to Roy Wilson Howard, who in 1927 had paid Dewart's father $2,-

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500,000 for the *Telegram,* and who in 1931 had paid the Pulitzer heirs five million for their papers—a total investment of from $9.5 to $11 million.

Howard now has his *Telegram* and *World* investments back, and stands to recover the *Sun's* price in five years or less. For he now owns the only afternoon paper in New York through which advertisers can reach readers who would be ashamed to hide behind Hearst's red-headlined *Journal-American,* and who would as soon be caught buying the *Daily Worker* as the "radical" *Post-Home News.*

But happier even than Howard, who began his career in the American tradition as a newsboy in Indianapolis, are the advertisers and the advertising agencies. For they are reaching the same people (the first day's run of the *World-Telegram and The Sun* exceeded seven hundred thousand) for less money. And if this juxtaposition of sober statistics leads the layman to a suspicion that Howard and the advertising gentry have been addressing almost identical prayers heavenward, the coincidence is not altogether accidental. One need not be irreverent to note that Tom Dewart, at least, heard them.

This is the significant fact for all Americans. For advertising men have no roots in the First Amendment, no interest in the magnificent traditions of American journalism, no immediate goal except to make money. And whenever they find one or more publishers with the same mentality, the result is a foregone conclusion.

So the story of the *Sun* is not the passing of a great newspaper. Actually, it had not been a great newspaper during the half-century since it passed out of Dana's hands. Nor is the *Sun* story the fact that the number of dailies in America has diminished by over twenty per cent since 1938.

The story of the *Sun* is that the only factors standing between any paper and a similar fate are a few tangibles that can be looked up in Dun & Bradstreet, and a lot of intangibles that have mostly to do with the vigor of publisher initiative and reader response.

Among the latter might be listed the loyal support of a public that understands what is going on, knows what it wants, and refuses to play the role of disinterested bystander. It is doubtful whether many men of influence went to Tom Dewart to say frankly that his (and their) paper was slipping. For it is a curious fact that a nation that has fought several wars, any number of legislative free-for-alls, and not a few Supreme Court battles to secure the right to read what it wants, has produced a generation which apparently believes that it has shown its full devotion to the First Amendment when it deposits its pennies (or nickels) on the newsstand counters.

But the main spotlight will continue to play on the power struggle between newspaper publishers and advertisers.

No one argues that advertising is bad *per se,* or that the urge to make money is unbecoming in a publisher. To admit this is not, however, to dismiss the central fact that the alliance between publishers and advertisers is in reality a continuing and never-ending battle of wits and dollars, a struggle in which only the publishers can be expected to represent the reading public. Nor let us forget that the publishers were not saddled with this terrible responsibility by default; they willingly, indeed eagerly, assumed it as a continuing obligation to a people that had given them special status.

More than money is required here; more even than a determination to go broke and hock to the hilt before quitting. Initiative, imagination, and hard work play a part: A month in Bermuda may prove as disastrous as a barefaced deal, for journalism is a 365-day-a-year trade. Surely the conscientious serving of all the readers one pretends to want, rather than a select "leadership core," is a minimal expectation: The old-time publisher-editors who periodically pounded their reporters' beats would scarcely settle for some of today's editorial teas and suburban lounge-car soundings. Finally to print too much, written too dryly, displayed too dully, is a little like paying off one's obligation to the public in Confederate banknotes. —Llewellyn White

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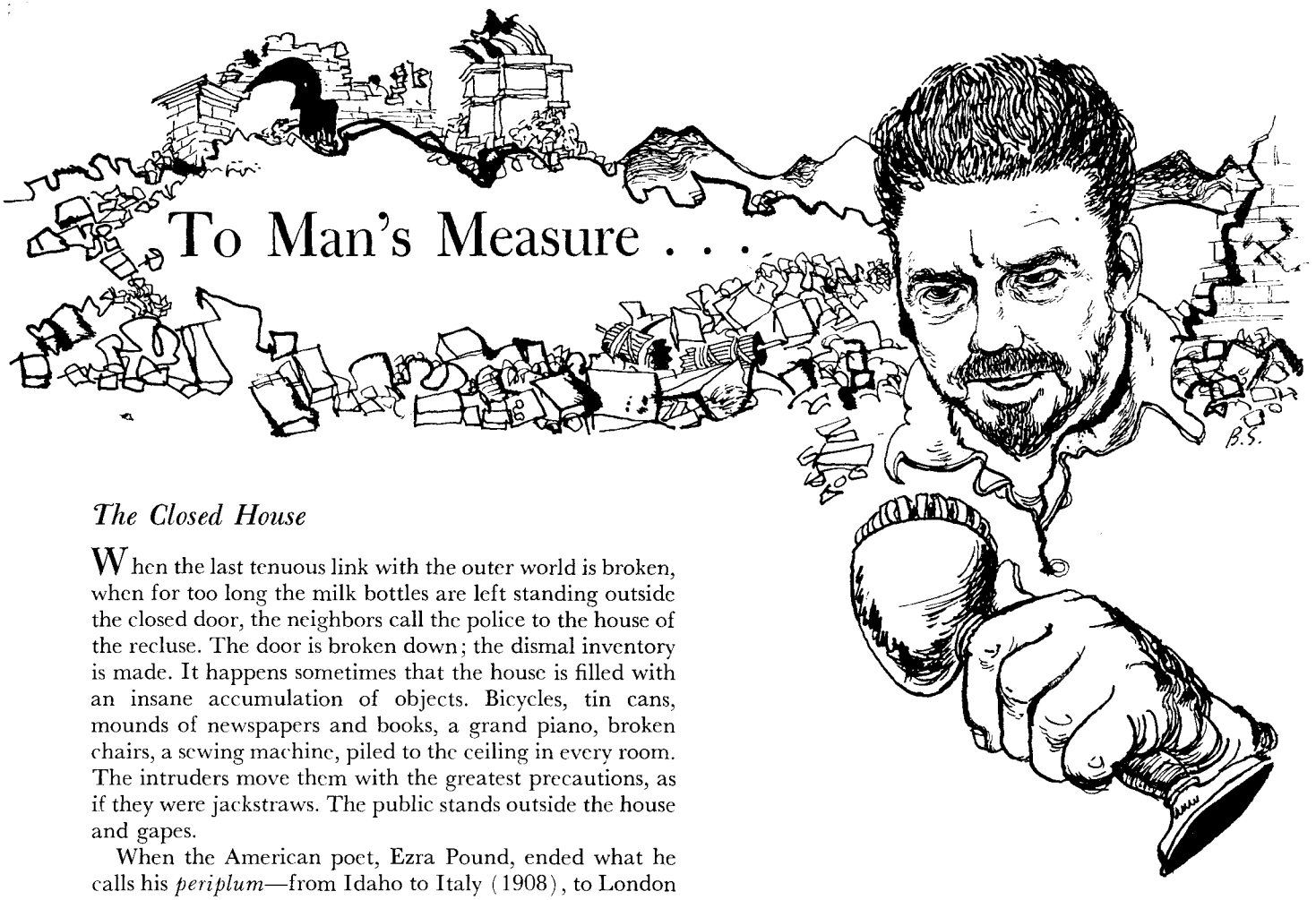
To Man's Measure . . .



The Closed House

When the last tenuous link with the outer world is broken, when for too long the milk bottles are left standing outside the closed door, the neighbors call the police to the house of the recluse. The door is broken down; the dismal inventory is made. It happens sometimes that the house is filled with an insane accumulation of objects. Bicycles, tin cans, mounds of newspapers and books, a grand piano, broken chairs, a sewing machine, piled to the ceiling in every room. The intruders move them with the greatest precautions, as if they were jackstraws. The public stands outside the house and gapes.

When the American poet, Ezra Pound, ended what he calls his *periplum*—from Idaho to Italy (1908), to London (1909-1920), to Paris (1920-1924), to Italy again (1924-1945)—he returned to his native land under arrest for treason. He had broadcast for Mussolini. In Washington, certified insane and confined, he later was awarded a prize for his poetry. It was then that the amateur thought-police and the newspapermen broke into the house of his poetry. Stepping over words and phrases in Greek, Latin, Italian, French, German, Spanish, and Provençal, skirting ideographs in Sanskrit and Chinese, hopping over erudite, or confidential, allusions, the newspapermen investigated the latest addition to the house, *The Pisan Cantos*—written while Pound was a prisoner of the U. S. Army in Pisa—picked up a few words here and there, the most readily comprehensible, the ugliest, and hurried back to print them.

The public looked with astonishment and real dismay at various objects extricated from Mr. Pound's poem. Item: the word "yidd"; item: the word "nigger"; item: the American flag described as "the bacon-rind banner"; item: the American people, Mr. Pound's compatriots, alluded to insistently as "*barbaroi*"—an epithet that it is not necessary to translate. The public could not believe that a man so venomously detached from the feeling of his country could be given a prize. It was as if a cross-eyed, bowlegged girl had won at Atlantic City.

Pound is sixty-five now and locked up. You think of all the books he has written and of all the articles written about him before the war, when his anti-Semitism was taken for no more than a tedious idiosyncrasy, his dispraise of his country for no more than wounded vanity. You read *The Pisan Cantos.* In fairness, the cantos are a lament more than anything else. They are exciting to read if you keep clear of the crossword puzzles. It was decent in Pound not to go back on Mussolini, "poor Ben," or, after having talked on the Italian radio, to make no attempt to sound like the Voice of America. There are other items besides the ugly ones to present from *The Pisan Cantos,* and two of them are these: "As a lone ant from a broken ant-hill from the wreckage of Europe, *ego scriptor.*" and: "Oh, let an old man rest."

But what poet sounds like the voice of America? What poet in our times is not in a closed house of his own? It is not always by choice. Few of the better poets think that this is a time for "art for art's sake." Most are socially conscious. They are sorry that they have to live in a marginal world, writing for each other, writing about each other—as Whitman said, "incommunicado." They recognize and fear the danger that writing will become an end in itself.

The war affected poets in various ways. It got the Frenchman Aragon out of his doctrinaire Communist isolation. He wrote *Le Crève-Coeur,* in which he could quote Richard II—"You may my glories and my state depose. But not my griefs. Still am I king of those"—and speak brokenheartedly of occupied France. He was listened to by Frenchmen and inspired their resistance. The war brought Pound to the microphone. Obsessed with the comic illusion that "Muss" would someday accept his credit scheme, and grieving because the monuments he loved were being destroyed, he talked his way into treason.

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The poets live in a dilemma. They have money and live in the country, or they starve in the cities, or they take a job with Mr. (not yet Senator) Luce, in which case all their friends, even the rich ones, tell them that they have sold out. In South America things are sometimes better ordered; they put their poets in the diplomatic service.

Ariosto, the "Divine Lodovico," (*Orlando Furioso*) was employed as a diplomat also, and at first it looks as if the artist and the poet were far better off in the Italian Renaissance than they are now. The artist was given enormous surfaces on which to paint pictures that the public wanted to see and could judge and admire. The poet was taken into some great nobleman's house; and later that sort of thing happened all over Europe, too, so that every work was dedicated, elaborately, to some eminence or other, or to some little princeling. The artist worked for wages.

But the painters and the poets did not like the system. The wages were irregular, and the duties included command performances at banquets. Ariosto certainly did not like the system, though he could not escape it. He did not like it when the Duke of Ferrara sent him on a mission to Pope Julius II, whom he found in so irritated a mood that he nearly was put to death; nor was he entertained when the Cardinal D'Este glanced up from *Orlando* and asked him: *"Dove hai trovato tutte queste coglionerie?"* for which there is a precise American translation which cannot be printed, so the question must be rendered: "Where did you find all the damn nonsense you have put in here?"

No, the dear lost times were not perfect for the poet or for his dignity. It would not be a solution to the modern poet's unhappy state even were the President to recall Archibald MacLeish to Washington; even were the ILGWU to give a job to Wystan Auden; even were public-spirited foundations to give a thousand more poets a thousand dollars each; even were General Motors to employ fifty poets at a time to entertain at conventions.

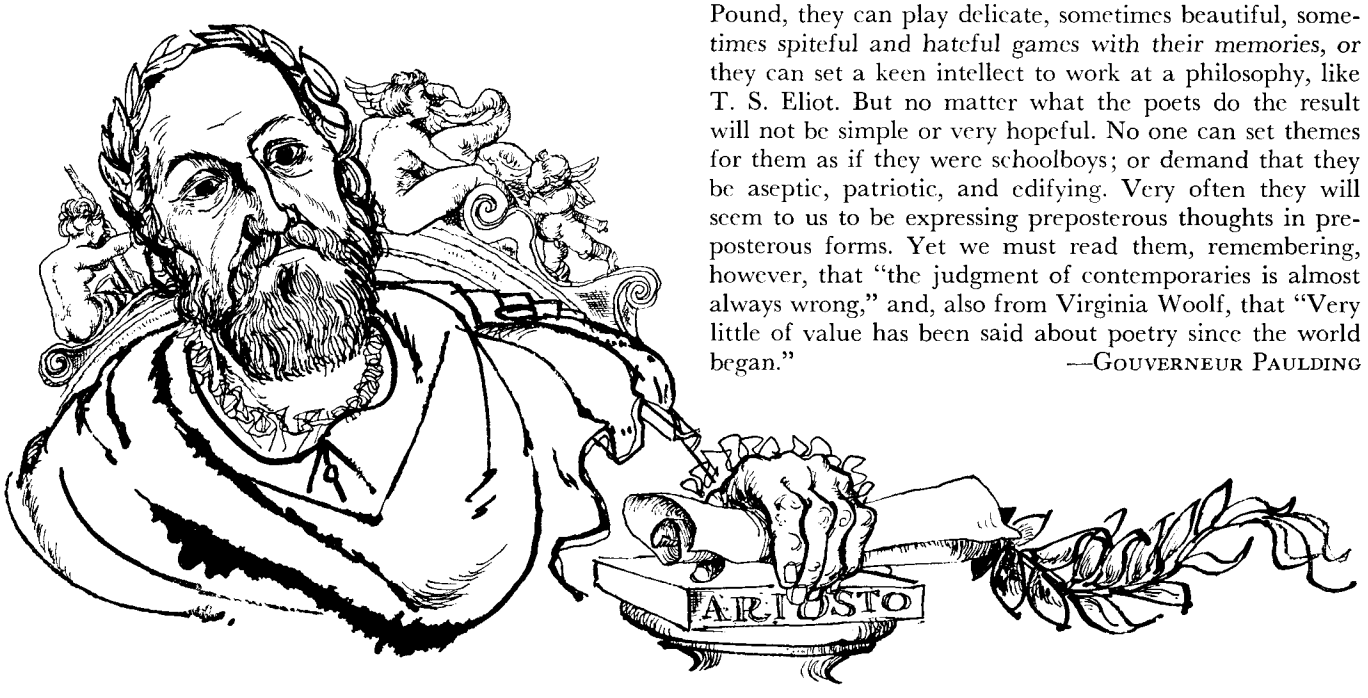
For the Italian poet of the Renaissance, as for the Elizabethan, the reward came from a broader source; the poets were close to the culture of their times. But that remark as it stands is absurd. For no man anywhere at any time is remote from, or can escape, the culture that surrounds him. Springing in Italy, spreading through Europe, the Renaissance brought a fresh chaos of language and ideas to which the poets could give form, recorded and enduring form, because the peoples themselves were at work, too, at this task and it was shared in by all. The adventure, imagination, humor, and passion, of *Orlando* reflected the excitement of a world over which the sun was rising in a new and promising dawn. After all, the First World War was more than five hundred years away.

Our poets must invent each one his own dawn. It is useless for them to consult the calendar, or the meteorological experts, or the sales prospects as forecast so diligently in the *Saturday Review of Literature,* or any of the other confidential guides to success. Not long ago no one even looked for the dawn or felt any anxiety about it. A century ago, the English-speaking poet stood in the broad Victorian daylight. But now the poet falters in the uncertain, changing shades.

Whittier and Longfellow—that was Mr. Brooks's *The Flowering of New England*—and of course it is not wholly impossible to suppose, as foreigners constantly are supposing, that it may be the turn of California to restore America's poetic confidence. Longfellow and the rest are gone. And there is a figure nearer to us in time, yet so distant now, and lost; Whitman. It is as if he had hardly gone from this closed room. His voice still echoes. And yet he is gone, as far back as Shakespeare, as far back as Ariosto, as far back as the Greeks.

Our poets express our times. We have the government (the poets) we deserve. In democracy, in poetry, it is a question of patience. If our poets are difficult, they are not all trying to be difficult. Einstein does not try to be difficult. Our times are difficult. Our poets can be antiquarian, moan and wail—like Robinson's Miniver Cheevy, who "wept that he was ever born, and he had reasons" or, like Ezra Pound, they can play delicate, sometimes beautiful, sometimes spiteful and hateful games with their memories, or they can set a keen intellect to work at a philosophy, like T. S. Eliot. But no matter what the poets do the result will not be simple or very hopeful. No one can set themes for them as if they were schoolboys; or demand that they be aseptic, patriotic, and edifying. Very often they will seem to us to be expressing preposterous thoughts in preposterous forms. Yet we must read them, remembering, however, that "the judgment of contemporaries is almost always wrong," and, also from Virginia Woolf, that "Very little of value has been said about poetry since the world began."

—GOUVERNEUR PAULDING



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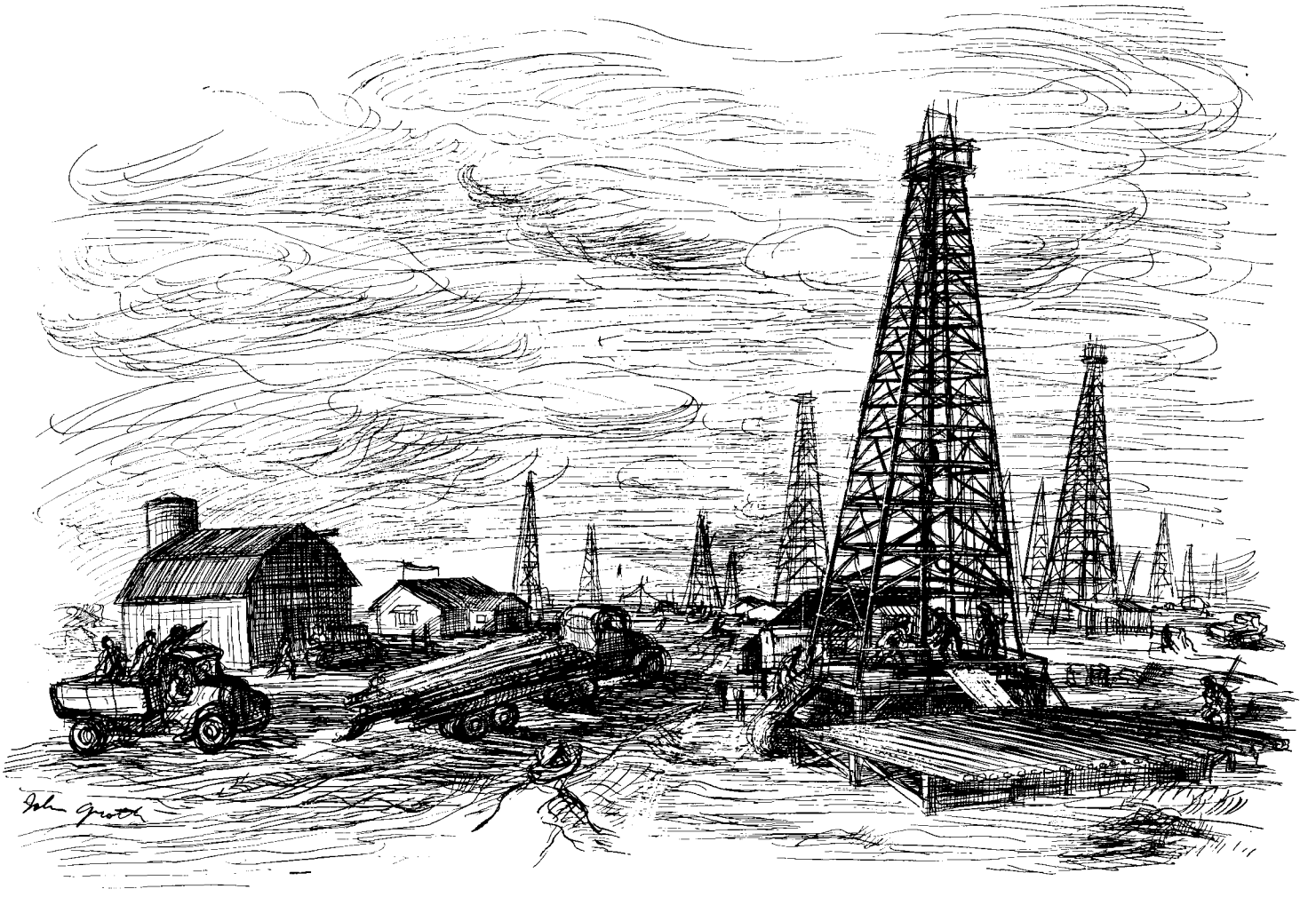

Canada's Black Gold

Huge strikes will soon turn the Northwest into a big oil exporter

A few weeks ago, a friend who works for one of the 180 oil companies that have, in the past two years, joined the rush to tap Alberta's fabulous new fields, took me out to a farm in the Redwater area whose owner had struck it rich. We drove northeast out of Edmonton, bumping over gumbo roads across the flat prairie, and finally reached the untidy collection of houses and stores that make up the village. Less than eighteen months ago, Redwater was a dreary commercial center for the scattered wheat farmers of the district. Nowadays oil riggers swarm through the town, and their trucks, loaded down with drilling equipment, are heading for oil fields that were amber, swaying seas of wheat last summer.

The farm we visited was owned by a Ukrainian immigrant who, unlike many of his neighbors, had been lucky enough to acquire the mineral rights on his 160-acre section when he bought it twenty-five years ago. He had raised wheat all those years: Sometimes he brought in a crop that netted him around five thousand dollars. Other years, the rain came too late to kill the grasshopper eggs in the ground, or winter lasted two or three days longer than it usually does—the growing season in these latitudes is fewer than one hundred days—and he had to go to the bank for another loan. Then, eighteen months ago, an oil company came along and offered him forty thousand dollars, plus royalties, for his mineral rights. The oilmen drilled first one well, then another, and sometimes the farmer's royalties amount to around ten thousand dollars a month.

We found him in his barn greasing his tractor, as he does every year at this time. "Well, Bill," the oil official said, "I see from the records that you're getting some fat checks from us. How do you find things now?"

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The farmer wiped his hands on his denims, took off his cap, and scratched his head as he pondered his reply. "Well," he said at last, "Not so bad, but my chickens ain't laying good."

No other comment illustrates so well how slowly Albertans have been getting adjusted to the oil boom. From a bare stretch of ground just outside of Edmonton, oil exploration has already spread out to include nearly eighty million acres in the province—and has spread over into neighboring Saskatchewan and British Columbia. In terms of U. S. distances, this is as though an oil company were "wildcatting" simultaneously from west Texas to California. Oil reserves in the area were estimated at 750 million barrels in the spring of 1949, at one billion in the summer, and at two billion in the fall. By the end of the year, experts spoke of them as being "several times" the latter amount.

Specifications for a fifteen-hundred-mile pipe line were drawn up only nine months ago, and have had to be increased for girth twice since, to cope with newly-discovered fields.

A little over two years ago Canada was importing ninety-two per cent of the petroleum it used, at an annual cost of three hundred million of its limited American dollars. Today, with oil flowing from three new fields around Edmonton at the rate of sixty-five thousand barrels a day, local production has already reached a level sufficient to take care of the needs of the prairie provinces, and import costs are being reduced at the rate of about a quarter of a million dollars a day, producing an annual saving of ninety million dollars. Furthermore, the wells currently in production are being held down to less than half of their capacity, because there is no way of shipping their full output. And new wells are going down at the rate of one every three days or so.

Western Canada—especially Alberta and Saskatchewan, may prove to be the last great oil frontier in the northern half of this hemisphere. The search is now spread over an area larger than the states of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, California, and Louisiana combined. Most of the capital involved in the boom, all of the technical skill, and a large proportion of the workers are from the United States.

Ever since 1914, oilmen have known there was oil under the prairie sod. Imperial Oil, Ltd., a Standard of New Jersey affiliate, started out to find it, and drilled over 130 holes, at a cost of some twenty-three million dollars, without finding a drop of oil. Then, on a windy February morning in 1947, a drilling crew on a flat wheatfield in the township of Leduc, just south of Edmonton, brought in a gusher of such dimensions that it obviously denoted a whole new field. An oil town immediately sprang up on the outskirts of Leduc. It took its name of Devon from the geological name of the stratum, five thousand feet below the surface, in which the oil had been found. Today, Devon is a separate municipality, with neat modern houses, paved streets, and the fanciest restaurant in all the province. Recently, Devon's oil families decided to build a year-round swimming pool for their youngsters. They held a raffle and raised forty thousand dollars.

The search then ranged farther northward. Just three miles west of where the Leduc field ended, drillers brought in a new field, this one with the largest well in the British Commonwealth—Golden Spike No. 1—with a potential of twelve thousand barrels a day. The size of the Golden Spike field is still a secret, but a single square mile of its area may produce eighty million barrels, on a basis of estimated reserves of 125,000 barrels an acre. In August, 1948, north of Edmonton, another field was discovered at Redwater. It is a major one by any standard. And early in 1949 the oil companies ranged still farther to the northwest and brought in yet another rich field at Normandville, in the Peace River area. To get the oil out of the prairies, two thousand miles west of industrial Ontario, poses a problem. Imperial Oil has floated a subsidiary company to build a fifteen-hundred-mile pipe line from Edmonton to Superior, Wisconsin, whence it is planned to ship the petroleum across the Great Lakes to refineries at Sarnia, Ontario.

Imperial is building, for service on the lakes, what will be the two biggest oil tankers in the world, mainly because of the need for stock-piling the petroleum at Superior during the winter freeze-up, and reducing the stockpiles as quickly as possible during the summer months of navigation.

The pipe line should be finished early in 1951, thus permitting a production of 150,000 barrels a day, instead of the present sixty-five thousand. But the line, in the view of some companies, will neither be big enough nor ready soon enough.

What distinguishes Canada's oil boom from any that has ever taken place is that it is the most orderly in the history of the industry. In the United States a farmer usually gets mineral rights automatically when he buys his land, but most of Canada's prairie farmers hold only surface rights. About fifteen million acres of land, with mineral rights, were given to the Canadian Pacific Railroad in 1881. Another four million acres had been acquired by the Hudson's Bay Company when it handed over its other reserves of land to the Canadian government around the same time. The mineral rights to the remainder of this vast territory, an area of some eight hundred thousand square miles, are held by the provincial governments. And the provincial governments, with Alberta in the lead, are seeing to it that their properties are not acquired by any monopolies which might hold back development.

When a company applies to the Alberta government for mineral rights on a stretch of land, it has to submit its program of development, committing itself to the expenditure of a certain sum every year. If it does not carry out this program, which is subject to regular inspection, it must pay a fine and forfeit the rights.

Whenever a new well is brought into production, the production of all other wells has to be reduced accordingly, to conform with the maximum total of sixty-five thousand barrels daily. With exploration, drilling, and transportation costs averaging about $150,000 a well, each discovery is almost painful news.

If a company brings in a well on new acreage, the fact that it has fulfilled its development program does not entitle it to rights on all the acreage. The provincial government divided the area on the map into a series of alternating black and white strips. The company

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can take half the land, but only in the form of either all the white strips or all the black strips, and in no way can its land form a solid block. The remainder of the strips are auctioned off separately. During 1949, the Alberta government brought in over nine million dollars by means of auctions of this kind.

In a business as unpredictable as oil exploration, where a gusher can be found only fifteen feet from a dry well, no experienced company takes risks unless it knows that those risks are either negligible or justified. An Imperial official told me, "The fact is that every oilman in the province is convinced that all we have found so far is actually only a seepage from the biggest darned oil field in the world." He said this with unprintable emphasis.

The Athabaska Tar Sands, in the northeast of Alberta, hold reserves conservatively estimated at over one hundred billion barrels, nearly as much as all the Middle East's fields combined. Unfortunately, no technique has yet been worked out for extracting the oil at commercial prices, but it is believed that these, too, are ancient seepages from some huge field so far undiscovered.

Hand-in-hand with petroleum discoveries is the development of Alberta's huge natural gas reserves. Just up the Athabaska River from Edmonton, fishermen and hunters can punch holes in the riverbank, touch a light to the gas that hisses out, and cook their meals. This doesn't mean that a gas company just has to stick a pipe in the ground to get its supplies; nevertheless, a fairly free metaphorical description of Alberta would be to describe it as a province lying on a cloud of natural gas which in turn is floating in a sea of oil. Two years ago, the natural-gas reserves of the province were estimated at four and a half million cubic feet. Most of these were in the south, but after the new oil discoveries in the north, the proven reserves must be nearly double that amount today. For years, Edmontonians have done all their domestic heating and cooking with natural gas, at a cost of about one hundred dollars annually for a good-sized home.

These reserves suggest important possibilities for a large-scale chemical industry in the province, and also for exporting natural gas to the western United States. Accurate forecasts on either of these developments are difficult to make. Western Canada has always complained that local industries are penalized by the Dominion's intricate structure of rail-freight rates, which make it cheaper for Alberta to send its cattle east than to set up its own meat-packing and leather plants. Certainly, the proven existence of these resources will only strengthen provincial pressure on the Dominion government to swing the industrial center of balance westward.

The export of both natural gas and petroleum into the United States poses problems for both the Canadian and U. S. governments. At the present rate of development—leaving aside the imminent discoveries of other fields—Canada could become an oil-exporting nation by 1980.

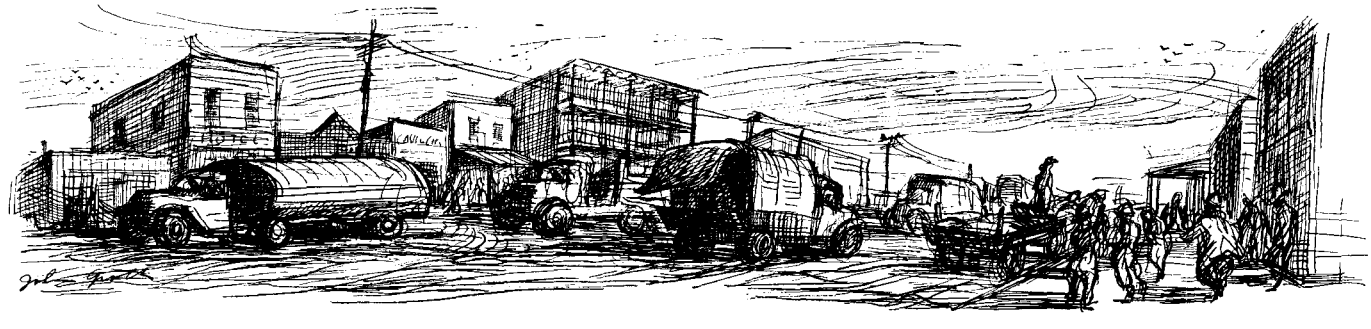
As the western Canadian oil resources are developed, they will compete with domestic American fields. U. S. oil companies are already pressing for duties on imported oil, and they will certainly increase their pressure with each indication that Canada may eventually become the world's greatest producer. During the Second World War, well over a hundred million dollars went into the Canol pipe line, which paralleled the Alaska Highway. Nowadays this pipe line is of no strategic use. The huge refinery erected at Whitehorse in the Yukon was dismantled two years ago and brought, piece by piece, more than a thousand miles by highway to the Alberta fields.

The private companies, as they extend their search for more and more fields in western Canada, are already across the Rockies and onto the Pacific Coast, where communications with Alaska are much easier. One company is drilling a test well on the northern tip of the Queen Charlotte Islands, and it expects to find oil.

Alberta's Social Credit leaders, who have traditionally raised hob in Canadian politics, have made it quite plain that they have no intention of allowing the province's natural resources to be exploited for the sole benefit of industries in other areas. Mr. N. E. Tanner, the Minister of Mines and Minerals, has said that he will allow no exports of natural gas until Alberta itself has fifty years' proven reserves. But with hundreds of new industries relying on natural gas, the rate of consumption would be practically impossible to estimate.

The best index to the future is the rate of immigration into Alberta, not only from the United States and Britain, but also from other parts of Canada. Before the war, Edmonton was a city of seventy thousand, which existed mainly as a supply center for the Northwest Territories. Today, its population stands at over 130,000, and its corporate area is almost as big as Philadelphia's. With immigrants come industry and commerce. A record half-yearly surplus of nearly twelve million dollars was piled up by Alberta in the first six months of the current fiscal year, and provincial leaders estimate that if the surplus goes on gaining at this rate Alberta will be a tax-free province within ten years. Wholesale trade in Alberta during the first seven months of 1949 hit $216,190,000, compared to $180,150,000 for the same period in 1948. Figures such as these show why Albertans are putting a Western-style welcome mat at their door.

—Sydney Morrell



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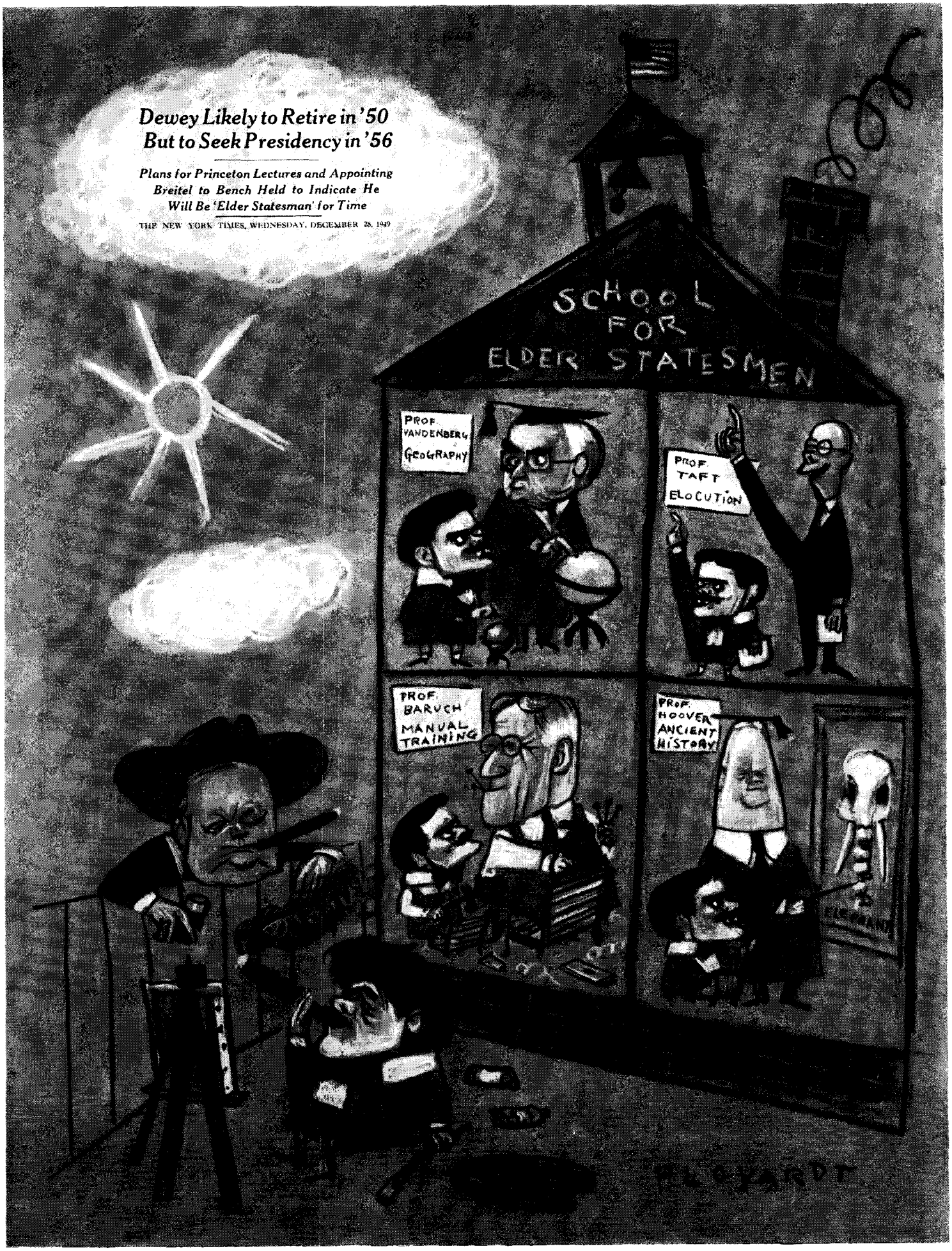
Dewey Likely to Retire in '50
But to Seek Presidency in '56
Plans for Princeton Lectures and Appointing Breitel to Bench Held to Indicate He Will Be 'Elder Statesman' for Time
THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1949
SCHOOL FOR ELDER STATESMEN
PROF. VANDENBERG GEOGRAPHY
PROF. TAFT ELOCUTION
PROF. BARUCH MANUAL TRAINING
PROF. HOOVER ANCIENT HISTORY
BLOCH

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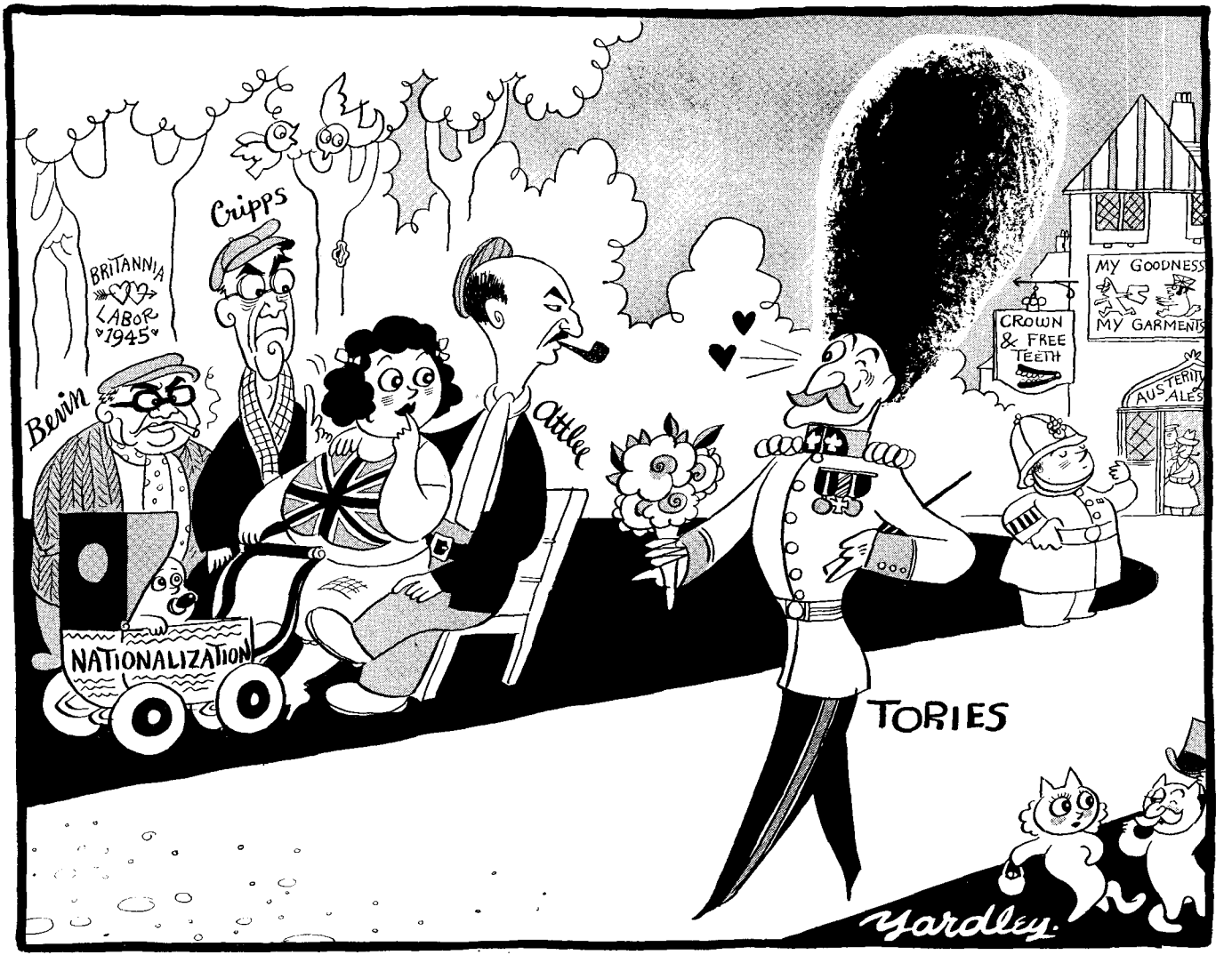

British Labour—Accent on the Right

Housewives and 'floating voters' worry the Socialists at election time

Nobody votes against Santa Claus; but when everybody pays Santa's bills, everybody has to take stock now and then. February 23 is stocktaking day in Britain. The election will not be fought on the issue of the welfare state. That is not in dispute. It will be fought on three other issues, all concerning administration: first, the *comparative cost and efficiency* of the Socialist and Conservative welfare programs; second, the comparative efficacy of the Socialist and Conservative plans to put Britain on its feet by 1952; and third, the comparative talents of the Socialist and Conservative politicians for shaping Britain's domestic and foreign policies in the next five years.

The Labour Party has both an advantage and a disadvantage in asking for a second mandate. The advantage is that in the past five years it has certainly redistributed Britain's incomes in favor of the poorer half of the people, something which no party has ever done before. But even among the people who have benefited most—the industrial and agricultural wage earners—Labour is operating against certain disadvantages. Most wage earners are men, and it is to them that the doubled wages, shorter hours, longer paid holidays, midday meat meals, and the like, have gone.

The real hero of wartime and postwar Britain is a heroine: the housewife. Her lot has been made heavier since 1939 by lines at the stores, rationing, and, more subtly, by the increased

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leisure given her "old man," who keeps more cash for himself and gives her less—on the theory that the extra taxes on *his* postwar drinks, smokes, and betting subsidize *her* foodstuffs in the stores. One unknown quantity on February 23 will be the extent to which the working housewives will follow their husbands' lead and vote Labour again.

Housewives have no union, spokesman, or organization. The unions, which supply four-fifths of the dues-paying members of the Labour Party, and pay six-sevenths of its bills, are mostly made up of, and run by, males. They, more than their wives, have been the gainers in the past five years. If the women of Britain—with a million more votes than the men in an electorate of thirty-four million—turn against the Socialists, it won't be because they *and* their husbands are dissatisfied with the idea of the welfare state. It will be because of its cost, the rows and crises in the Labour Administration, and (above all) the overtopping taxes.

The teams of unionists and managers that have visited the United States since the ERP began have all returned emphasizing the American worker's basic incentive: namely, his ability, if he works harder, to earn more, *not* have it taxed away, and buy "luxury" items at reasonable retail prices, *not* rendered crippling by a twenty-five-to one-hundred-per cent "purchase" tax. What has burned British workers and their wives is that the welfare state, which they like, won't allow them to keep as much cash as before and go on spending it as they like. All want welfare, but all want it gratis.

In the past two years particularly, Britishers have come to realize that welfare is not a bonus. It is an alternative; and once the state takes over the manufacture and distribution of welfare, there is less of the other kind of welfare—the privately-selected and the privately-purchased kind. American critics have singularly failed to understand that "austerity"—more than U. S. aid—has paid for state welfare. Labour has taken away private spending power, and given welfare in return. Accordingly, it hasn't been the rich who have paid; it has been the mass of British workingmen and their wives, who account for four-fifths of the consumption of the most highly taxed items in Britain since 1945: tobacco, liquor, the movies, and gambling. Conservatives probably pay no more than twenty per cent of the total of these taxes. More than the *total* yield of the British income tax is raised by sales taxes from workers.

That's what I mean when I say that one of the main issues on February 23 will be what the working people think of the value they're getting in welfare for the taxes they're paying. Sixty cents for a pack of twenty cigarettes nets Sir Stafford Cripps forty cents to pay out as state expenditure.

There's much misgiving inside the Labour Party about the costs and administration of the bewilderingly numerous public monopolies established since 1945. The Conservatives have been hamstrung in their arguments by the fact that they themselves might well have nationalized the coal mines and railroads if they had been in power.

Whether or not it is "too soon to judge" the public monopolies, as Labour insists, facts show that the Government has tackled too much, too fast, too self-assuredly, in the belief that a good blueprint could "carry" poor, bumbling, and downright bad administrators. The party goes to the people dogged by a long list of *personal* failures and inadequacies, due to appointments made by Labour chiefs, including the Prime Minister (in the case of at least three notoriously incompetent Ministers). The roster has been growing in the past two years, as more and more public boards have taken over this or that—from electricity, gas, road transport, and civil aviation to peanuts in Africa.

In this context, there can be no doubt that the extreme left-wingers are a great handicap to the party. John Strachey, Emanuel Shinwell, and Aneurin Bevan make up a "Keep Left" triumvirate that has insisted loudly on bigger and better socialism, more and more appointments, larger and larger taxes. The Labour strategists have begged these three, and their bright young followers, to roar more like sucking-doves. Herbert Morrison, the party's bland strategist and tactician, has taken the field to ensure the sympathies of the middle-of-the-road "floating vote," and the left-wingers will not be allowed to come near the strictly rationed microphones of the BBC during the campaign.

The Labour Party would have fewer difficulties in this particular election if it had not changed so much in the last fifty, and even the last five, years. Historically, Labour has absorbed aristocrats, intellectuals, trade unionists of all shades, Christian co-operative adherents, and the Fabian and other societies. The co-operatives, the trade unions, and the parliamentary party are the trinity that British Socialism has traditionally revolved around.

As long as the party was in opposition, it was led, and could afford to be, by a caucus of unions and co-operatives. But when it gained power, in 1924 and again in 1929, it became obvious that the government of the nation would not take orders from a caucus *outside* Parliament, for the union and co-operative leaders had not been elected by the people. Unfortunately, Ramsay Macdonald solved the 1931 currency crisis by creating a coalition with the Conservatives behind the back of the Labour rank and file. Ever since then, the Labour movement has been divided into two wings: the extremists, who believe the Cabinet should be controlled by a caucus of "the stalwarts" (and paymasters) of Labour—i.e., the trade unions and co-operatives; and the moderates, who believe firmly that the parliamentary party should run itself. To make matters more confusing, moderates and extremists alike are distributed through *all* the constituent elements of the Labour movement—in one and the same trade union or co-operative, for instance. Each contains its own spectrum.

The moderates have been winning out since 1945 because the Cabinet could not share its secrets and responsibilities with a caucus outside Parliament, but the extremists are by no means inactive. Inspired by the triumvirate mentioned above, they are led by the intellectual backbenchers of the "Keep Left" school, including R. H. S. Crossman of *The New Statesman and Nation,* Sir Richard Acland, formerly of the Christian Common Wealth

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group, Donald Bruce, Bevan's parliamentary private secretary, Michael Foot, co-editor of *The Tribune,* and others. Several years ago, when this group believed in trading and collaborating with Russia, and was quite avowedly anti-American, it had a wider influence than it has now. But what it has lost in the breadth of its influence it has probably gained in intellectual penetration. It was the spearhead of the opposition inside Labour against all of Ernest Bevin's foreign policies, from Palestine to Penang. The latest *Keeping Left* pamphlet tilts more genteelly against Bevin, and almost oozes a new-found desire for co-operation with the United States.

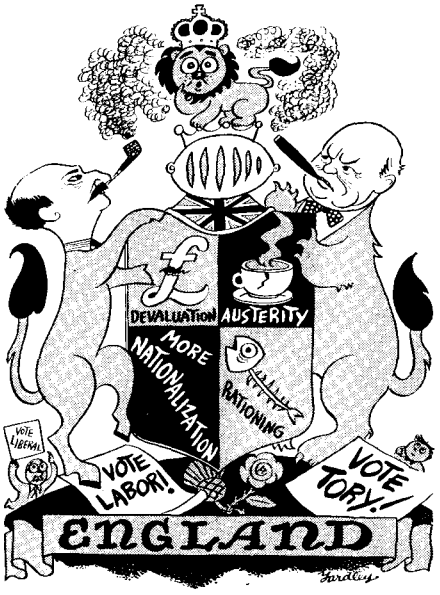
The extremist group, a thorn in the fleshy bulk of the Labour movement (the mass of trade unionists, co-operative members, and respectable suburban Socialists), seems even more menacing to the "floating voter." Hence the attempts of the moderates to make Crossman and company pipe down.

The moderates of the Labour movement are indeed ponderous, particularly on the eve of a poll. Attlee is quiet, persuasive, unruffled; a Christian social worker, with the nerves of an ox; a man who can break an unofficial Communist-led strike of longshoremen with one radio talk (and he's a bad speaker) after local union leaders have failed repeatedly. Cripps is mercurial, unwilling to suffer fools, convinced of holding a Divine Commission to Do Good, apt to override anyone whose idea of Good differs from his, a man with a brilliant mind and no humor, but the courage (and perhaps the subconscious aim) of a martyr on the lookout for a stake.

Morrison, the antithesis of Cripps, is warm, sympathetic, undoctrinal, tactful, tactical, mobile, human, and wily —a "natural" as a party boss. Bevin is solid and bulldoggish; he knows English (but not Celtic) workers as no one else in the movement knows them; he is miscast as Foreign Secretary, because he cannot imagine what it's like to be a foreigner, but (as his switch away from Russia shows) he is uncompromising, implacable in pursuit of what he takes to be right and proper. Attlee, Cripps, Morrison, Bevin: This is the quadrumvirate of the moderates. Attlee appeals to the family man and his wife; Cripps to the intellectuals; Morrison to the "floating voters"; and Bevin to the trade unions' rank and file. It is a good combination, against which the enamel-bright intellectual extremists, as well as the Communists, hammer in vain.

Moreover, the moderates have many allies, whom they may or may not keep. Recently, when Labourites in Parliament proposed nationalizing industrial insurance, and possibly entering the field of retail trading, the consumers' co-operative movement for the first time in fifty years found itself seriously out of step with the party. (The co-ops have their own insurance and retail interests.) The breach was healed when the party agreed to drop *nationalization* of insurance and substitute *mutualization*—ownership of the companies by their policyholders—and shelved the problem of retail distribution. This has brought the co-op movement—with its subsidized thirty or forty Labour M.P.'s and perhaps a hundred candidates—back into camp.

The trade-union movement itself



has 9.3 million members and nearly a hundred subsidized M.P.'s. Since the present Government repealed the 1927 Trades Disputes Act it has been compulsory for a trade unionist to pay a political levy to the Labour Party, unless he "contracts out" in writing. The penalties for "contracting out" are, however, so great that few unionists attempt it. When it *has* been attempted, unofficial strikes have broken out, and employers have had to side with the unions. The result has been an enormous accession of financial strength to the unions and the party, even if there is still no guarantee that all of the unionists will actually *vote* Labour.

In the unions there is great discontent over the Government's income-freezing policy, now two years old but under heavier fire than ever because of post-devaluation price rises. The coal miners, who have had greater pay increases than workers in any other field since 1939—have voted the policy down conclusively, and it has been endorsed by a vote of only 7-6 on the part of Britain's union leaders.

The recruiting of experienced union leaders for the Cabinet, Parliament, or the innumerable (and much more highly paid) state boards, has left Britain's present union leadership in a sorry plight. It will take a long while to achieve the caliber of American unions' research, education, and leadership. This may turn British unionists away on either flank—to one of the hundred or so Communist candidates (whose chances actually seem worse than ever), or to one of the four hundred Liberals or nearly six hundred Conservatives.

There are a few things about the election to bear in mind. Foreign affairs, the Commonwealth, Western Union, the sterling area, European recovery, and—except for the Labour extremists' and Communists' mention of them —Anglo-American matters, are playing no part at all in the campaign.

Secondly, there is widespread belief that the election had to come quickly because the calendar-year 1949 figures will look better than the fiscal-year 1949-1950 figures, which will be presented early in April. The new Government will immediately rush into the unenviable task of drafting a painful budget. Trade unionists, housewives, taxpayers—all of them sense this in different ways.

Third, the government's full-employment policy reposes on the policy of freezing incomes. If the unions fight hard against the latter, the party that wins will have to cope with inflationary demands from the unions.

Fourth, there are a few Labour wise men who would not be averse to letting the Conservatives win, and face the next five years. If elected, Labour

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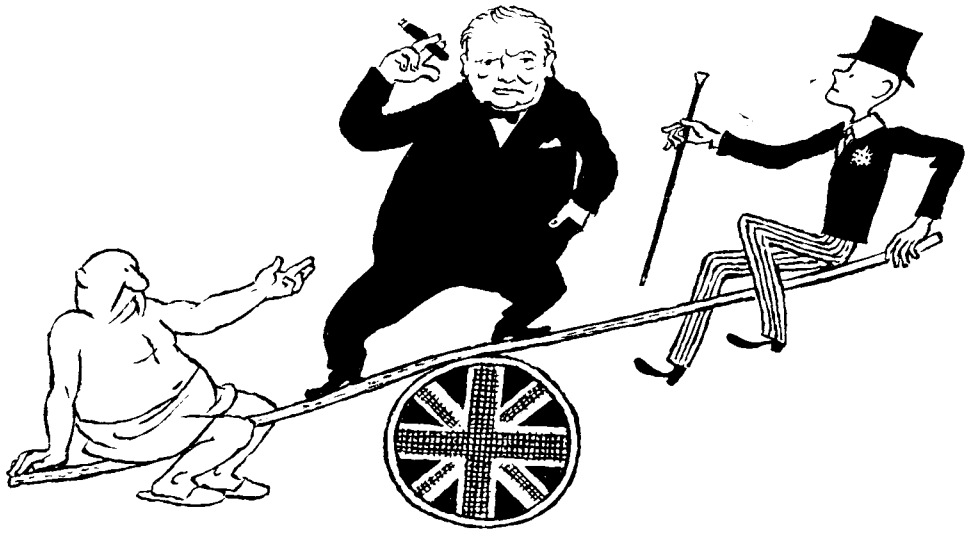
will have to redeem all its new promises before it has had time to consolidate the gains of 1945-1950, and to clear up the administrative muddle of too much and too rapid state-monopolization.

It is said that if Labour wins, the left wing will be stronger, relatively, and Aneurin Bevan's chances of becoming Prime Minister before long will be enhanced. I disagree. If Labour wins, the moderates will be able to ascribe victory to their moderation. They are backing "the other Welshman," Jim Griffiths, ex-boss of the South Wales coal miners, and now Minister of National Insurance, for the Prime Ministry after Attlee. If Labour *loses,* its left wing will once more taunt Churchill across the house, just as it did throughout the war, and will ascribe the Labour defeat to the milk-and-water socialism of the moderates. Of these odd alternatives it is indeed hard to say which would better suit Britain for the next five years.

One thing remains certain. Whichever party wins, it will have to grapple with such unpostponable problems as the drain of defense upon Britain's resources; the drain of repaying the "sterling balances" mainly for the benefit of India and the Orient (one-eighth of all Britain's exports in the past two years have gone to the East without buying Britain a single thing in imports in exchange), and, finally, the drain of trying to do all this, *and* acquire new capital equipment, *and* raise the standard of living. With the end of ERP in the offing, and with the dollar gap nowhere near overcome, the outlook for the British voter-consumer seems much like "the mixture as before": more-or-less better-quality state welfare, more of some taxes and perhaps less of others, not much "scrapping of the controls," and—even if Labour wins—perhaps rising unemployment, if Britain cannot pay for even its reduced imports.

British voters are still shrewd and sensible. There is a lot of talk about a bitter, class-ridden election, but I don't think it will be one. For the British already seem to have sensed that no Government can do for them what they alone will have to do—work out their own salvation. That's something gained, because they didn't even see that in 1945. —GRAHAM HUTTON



Can the Conservatives Change Their Spots?

A famous Whig Lord Chancellor, Viscount Brougham, who gave his name to a carriage and his face to one of the masks on the cover of *Punch,* once remarked that "The Tory Party has always been known as the stupid party." If this was ever true, it is not now. There are plenty of stodgy, unintelligent men in the party, but there are also many of outstanding ability: Oliver Stanley, Anthony Eden, Walter Elliot, Oliver Lyttleton, Harold Macmillan, R. A. Butler, Quintin Hogg, David Eccles, Robert Boothby—and, of course, Winston Churchill. There is no lack of talent, but one trouble the Tories have, in common with the Labourites, is that the talented are sharply divided. The Conservative Party now contains three main elements: Roughly fifty per cent of its members in Commons are in the "center"; the rest are evenly divided into right and left wings.

There is no doubt that Conservatives of all three breeds are confident. Recent polls by the British (Gallup) Institute of Public Opinion give the party a narrow lead. The percentage of votes for Conservative candidates in recent by-elections has increased considerably. If the national vote mounts on the same scale, the party will have a comfortable majority in Commons.

Most Tories agree that few Britishers still believe in the divine right of the upper (or middle) class, but otherwise the three groups differ considerably on how to run the country and win the election. The party's platform statement, called *This Is the Road,* like most platforms can be interpreted in various ways, and, like most platforms, reflects the divergent shades of political opinion within the party that drafted it.

The right wing of the party stoutly opposes even that degree of state regulation which most Britishers probably consider reasonable in a modern industrial economy. This does not refer only to nationalization—the *entire* party is united against further extension of state ownership—but also to the whole system of controls which came into effect during the war.

All promises to remove governmental controls have drawn Labour taunts, "Tell us which ones!" The Conservatives have insisted that "until actually in power, they would not have

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the information necessary to answer." It is an unconvincing reply.

The right-wingers also disapprove of Labour's all-inclusive social-security program, as organized and administered by the state. In words often used by American Republicans, they claim that this program hinders the development of incentives, independence, and initiative. They favor an economic policy of "retrenchment and reform" —a policy which Labour calls, more flatly, "deflation."

The Conservatives' right wing in Commons includes Lyttleton, who is an industrialist, former President of the Board of Trade, and former Minister of Production; Robert Hudson, the wartime Minister of Agriculture; and Brendan Bracken, who was Minister of Information from 1941 to 1945 and is very close to Lord Beaverbrook and Churchill.

Left-wing Conservatives like Quintin Hogg, Capt. Peter Thorneycroft, David Eccles, and Christopher Hollis do not favor rapid or wholesale lifting of controls. Although they mistrust the increase in the power of the state, they concede that these days a large measure of state control is inescapable, especially in postwar Britain's peculiar circumstances.

They have also opposed the right-wing notion that unemployment is needed "to secure industrial discipline." Most of them agree with the Liberal economists on the need for *limited* unemployment for short periods—and so do some Labourites, though not in public.

Many of the ideas in the party's policy statements to date have come from the left-wingers. *The Industrial Charter* makes a great effort to combat Labour's most telling argument, namely that the Conservatives *favor mass unemployment*, or, if they do not actively favor it, would take no steps to prevent it, and the election manifesto, *This Is the Road*, says that the party's first aim will be the maintenance of full employment. *This Is the Road* promises to free the economy of controls when "the supply situation" permits. It veers to the right in advocating that the sections of the road-haulage industry already nationalized, and possibly civil aviation, be sold back to free enterprise.

This Is the Road also urges that the nationalization of the iron and steel industry be dropped, and suggests that the nationalized railways and coal producers be "decentralized" to ensure more competition. The platform, of course, promises continuance of all present social services.

The less colorful, less venturesome, and less inspiring Conservative Center makes up the bulk of the party in the Commons. Its big names are Eden, Harold Macmillan, who held office in the wartime coalition, and Sir David Maxwell Fyfe. Two more members who adhere loosely to the Center group are Stanley, now third in the Conservative hierarchy after Churchill and Eden, and Elliot, who has held quite a number of offices in previous Governments.

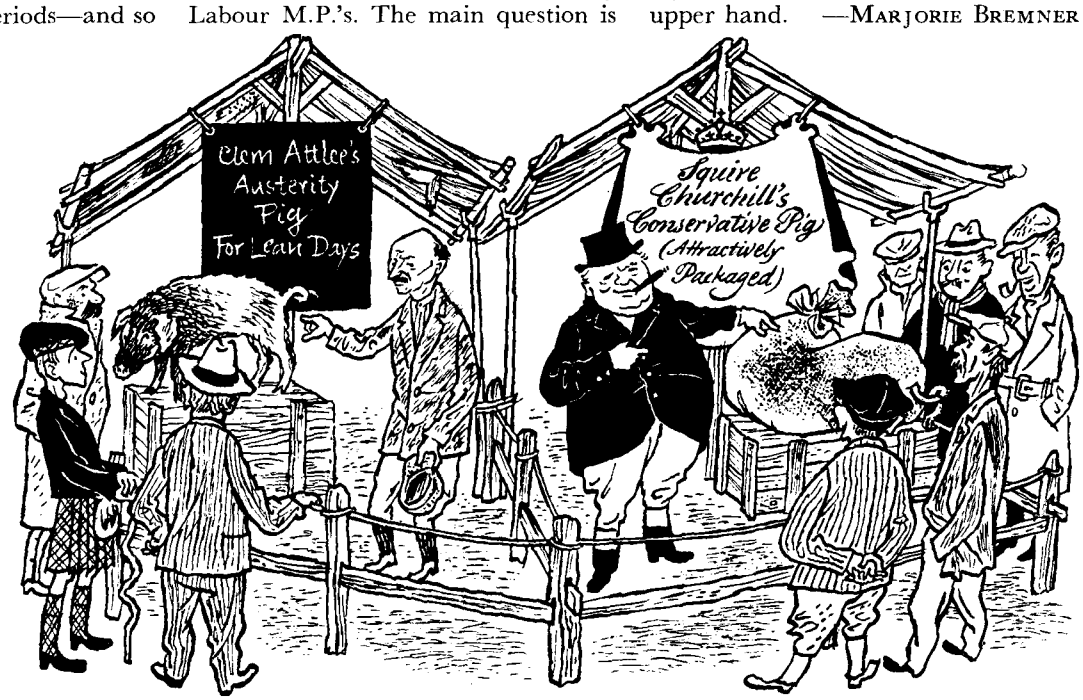
Any reform ever put through by a Conservative Government, the Labourites claim, came as a result of pressure from the Left, and Conservative support for such reform stems not from a genuine belief in equality or social justice, but from feudal concepts of *noblesse oblige*. Actually, the devotion of the left-wing Conservatives to social justice is as genuine and as free from condescension as that of many Labour M.P.'s. The main question is how much success the left-wingers will have convincing their own party.

Churchill, of course, remains the dominant party figure. It is never safe to predict his actions, but he is now believed to favor the right-wingers. He has for instance, been a vigorous advocate of the policy of lifting controls.

Most members of the House of Lords are Conservatives, and most are right-wingers. The bulk of Conservative popular support comes from the middle and upper classes, and many members of these classes seem genuinely convinced that if the clock were put back, everyone would benefit. The party is also swung toward the Right by its wealthy supporters *outside* the Commons—men of finance, commerce, industry—and probably four-fifths of the daily press.

The Tory right wing has no alternative but to support whatever the party proposes; but probably only a vigorous pushing of Tory Left ideas can corral enough of the "floating vote" to counteract Labour's attractions.

There is a good deal of energy on the Tory Left. The money and the machine are on the Right. The unpredictable Churchill appears to be on the Right, too. Should he suddenly decide —as he could—to throw his weight to the Left, there would indeed be a New Conservatism that would quickly emerge as a policy and program. But, right at the moment, it seems safe to say that the Old Conservatism has the upper hand. —MARJORIE BREMNER



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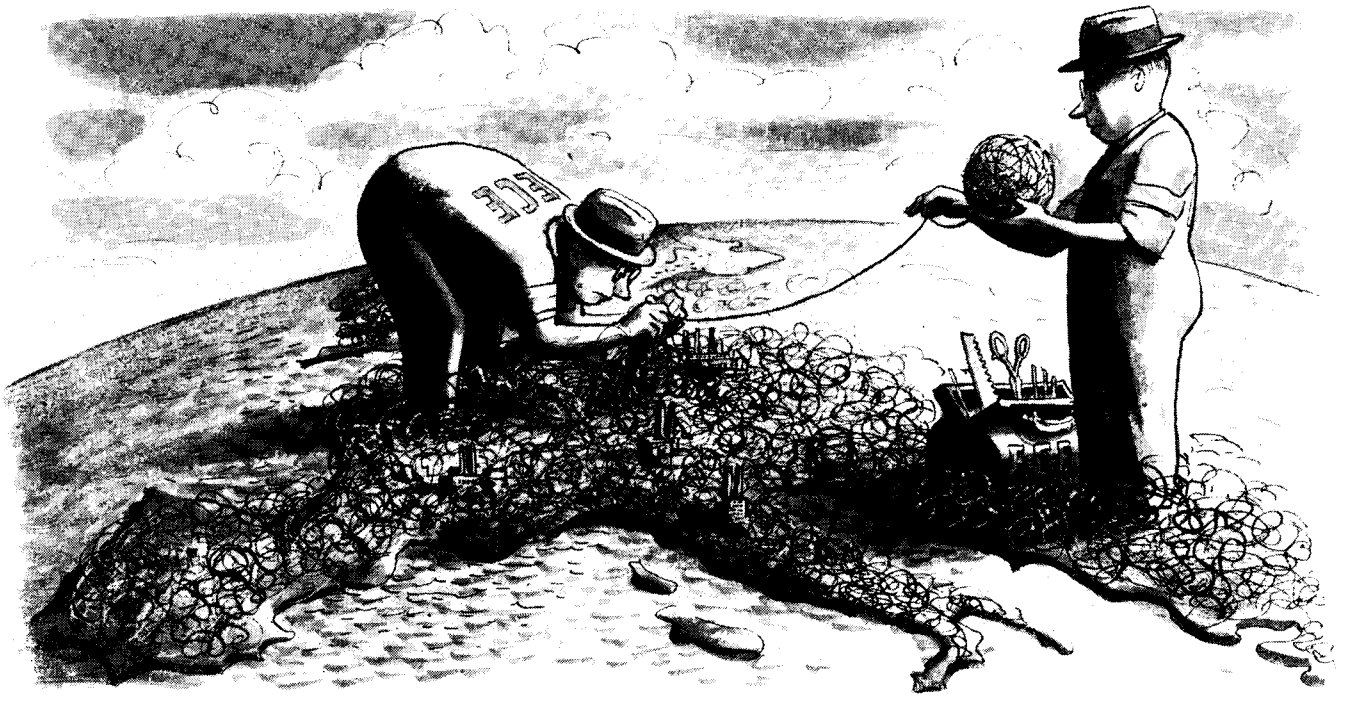

Switchboard of East-West Trade

The ECE works against great odds to make Europe one economic unit

March, 1947, was a difficult month. The failure of the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers was almost a foregone conclusion; President Truman's Doctrine accented sharply the disintegration of wartime East-West unity. In a continent prey to such divergent forces, the tasks assigned to the newly created Economic Commission for Europe sounded overly ambitious: The commission was empowered to facilitate European economic reconstruction, to raise the level of European economic activity, and to strengthen the economic relations of European countries with each other and with the outside world.

In the almost three years that have elapsed since, East-West wrangling has grown louder, but the ECE, working away quietly in Geneva, with no direct dollar aid, and with both the United States and the U.S.S.R. still on its governing body, has stuck to the goals its parent, the United Nations, set for it, making regular, constructive, and far-reaching decisions affecting the economic future of all Europe.

Administratively, ECE's immediate ancestor had been the U.N.'s Temporary Sub-Commission on Economic Reconstruction of Devastated Areas, which had been created in 1946, in the face of UNRRA's imminent demise. That year the U. S. State Department had drawn up proposals for a permanent European economic body, and this blueprint was highly influential in determining the shape ECE finally took.

On a technical level, the organization was descended from three European emergency economic bodies which had been carrying on the tradition of collaboration among the wartime Allies: The European Coal Organization (ECO) had, since May, 1945, effectively handled delicate problems of coal production and allocation in Europe. Eco, based in London, had profited from active Polish and Czechoslovak membership. The European Central Inland Transport Organization (ECITO) had faced the maze of postwar transport problems from its headquarters in Paris. The third organization was the Emergency Economic Committee for Europe (EECE); it possessed broad, vague powers, but had not had much opportunity to exercise them.

The ECE's first session, in May, 1947, was, not unexpectedly, a near-failure. Noisy East-West recriminations were its most outstanding feature. The delegates spent most of their time discussing procedural and structural matters, and the only development of importance was a decision that the secretariat should take the initiative in formulating concrete economic proposals for the second session. This seemingly minor suggestion mushroomed into one of the key features of the ECE: a strong and active secretariat. Instead of acting simply as learned stenographers, the ECE secretariat has tried to push, prod, and encourage member countries into agreement. It goes with-

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out saying that such behavior has not always been appreciated by countries under the pressure.

After the May meeting, the ECE slowly took shape. Under the direction of the Executive Secretary, Professor Gunnar Myrdal, distinguished economist, sociologist, and former Minister of Commerce in the Swedish Cabinet, the permanent staff of the ECE was gradually assembled. Numerically, the ECE Secretariat is insignificant; it comprises fewer than two hundred persons, including clerks and typists. The feature that has made the ECE bureaucracy unusual from the beginning has been the marked technical competence of the policymaking group around Myrdal.

The second session of the commission, held two months after the unsuccessful May meeting, was not much more promising than the first. By this time, Marshall had delivered his Harvard address, Molotov had just withdrawn from preliminary discussions on the Marshall Plan in Paris, and the issue of European reconstruction was well on its way to becoming part of the economic campaign in the cold war. Nevertheless the ECE was permitted to survive; its initial structure and functions were determined; and simple-majority voting procedure was accepted.

During the summer of 1947 the permanent body got down to business. Its structure reflected its ancestry: Its Coal Committee had inherited the work of ECO; the Committee on Inland Transport had some of the staff and all of the problems of ECITO; the Committee on Electric Power profited from the groundwork done by EECE. There were also a Committee on Industry and Materials, and a Panel on Housing Problems. ECE's formal voting membership consisted only of the European members of the U. N. plus the United States, the presence of the latter being justified by its occupation role in Germany and Austria. In practice, all European countries except Spain have participated in ECE discussions at one time or another.

The ECE was the very model of a politico-economic paradox: It was created for the purpose of engineering the recovery of all Europe at the very time Europe was breaking in two; it was created to promote peaceful trade

among what looked suspiciously like potential enemies; it was created to preach a stern doctrine of self-help-without-dollars at the very time that half of Europe was thirstily awaiting a dollar bonanza.

The Paris report of 1947, prepared by the Marshall Plan countries, allowed somewhat vaguely for their participation in the ECE. The countries of eastern Europe showed a skeptical willingness to see how the organization might evolve. Twice burned by political conflagrations at its first and second sessions, the ECE shied from further broad ideological debates. The technical meetings that began in September, 1947, afforded a welcome change. The commission invited technicians from all of Europe to discuss immediate problems in the fields of fertilizers, alkalis, housing, electric power, transport, timber, and industry and materials. In each case, government representatives, operating within a limited technical agenda, planned a work program, and defined short-term goals.

The commission was finally in business. The committees met again early in 1948, having by this time broken down their tasks to manageable segments, each assigned to a sub-committee or working-party. The ECE now began to resemble a landlocked Atlantic City, where businessmen of various kinds were constantly arriving for conventions. A lot of business was done in hotel rooms, at dinners, over cocktails. All the "businessmen" who came to ECE meetings were designated as government representatives, and were therefore acting on official instructions; but the preponderance of technicians unused to traditional diplomacy, of entrepreneurs accustomed to achieving results rather than reports, even of bureaucrats whose ministries were estranged from their own foreign offices, gave the meetings a distinctly non-diplomatic coloration. It was often apparent, for example, that eastern coal experts had an easier time understanding western delegates in the same field than either had understanding their own diplomats.

Until it sent expert delegates to a committee on agricultural problems which met in October, 1949, the U.S.S.R., although an active participant in the annual commission session, took part in no technical meetings except those of the unit which handled problems of rail transit through Germany and Austria. On the other hand, the eastern countries regularly sent delegates to ECE meetings, presumably with the tacit approval of the Soviet "motherland."

The third session proved to be a distinct improvement over its two predecessors. After a considerable amount of debate, the session approved the progress made in the fields already covered, and prepared the way for expansion of the commission's activity. The two new projects initiated at the April meeting were exploration of European agricultural problems, to be undertaken in collaboration with the U.N.'s Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO); and an examination of ways and means of increasing the flow of intra-European trade.

So the ECE entered its second year with a vote of confidence on its past performance and a formidable pair of new problems. During the summer of 1948, in addition to its regular work, the secretariat began probing broader agricultural and trade possibilities. It seemed safe to assume that both East and West might welcome an increase in mutual trade, provided that such an increase could be attained without marked alteration of political alignments. At a nine-day meeting on trade in September-October, 1948, a Committee on the Development of Trade was established. This committee, which

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met for the first time in February, 1949, is currently engaged in drawing up shopping lists of goods desired by the several countries involved.

Meanwhile, what constructive contributions to Europe's economy has the ECE made in its more than two years of existence? They can be best evaluated by looking at its work in four specific fields: coal, transportation, steel, and timber.

European coal supplies, coming from Germany, Poland, and Great Britain, are allocated every three months at meetings of the ECE Coal Committee, which also advises the U. S. on expected requirements of American coal. This means, in practice, that the experts gathered in Geneva determine to a large extent the rate of production in coal-importing countries (such as France). That they also help to determine the relative comfort of Europeans dependent upon coal for heating goes without saying. The equitability of ECE's allocation system is indicated by the continuing participation of both exporting and importing states, and by the fact that all decisions have been unanimous. The Coal Committee, now that supplies are increasing, does not attempt to allocate every ton mined; it concentrates on those qualities of coal that are still in short supply. Despite the continuing shortage of certain qualities, over a million tons of European fuel were not purchased in the spring of 1949, for reasons of price or quality, and it seems likely that U. S. exports to Europe, except for certain amounts of coking coals and anthracites, will soon be unnecessary. The future of coal allocations after the withdrawal of the United States will be a major issue. There is likely to be either a reversion to the producers' cartel, or the evolution of a new market-and-price technique, with consumer participation, in Geneva.

The activities of the ECE Inland Transport Committee command surprised respect. For nearly six solid months of negotiation, road-transport experts met in Geneva, in rooms decorated with road signs, direction-markers, and warning signals. From their labors emerged an efficient, uniform system of road signs, which any automobilist in Europe will welcome; uniform traffic and insurance regulations; and a general simplification and codification of road procedures.

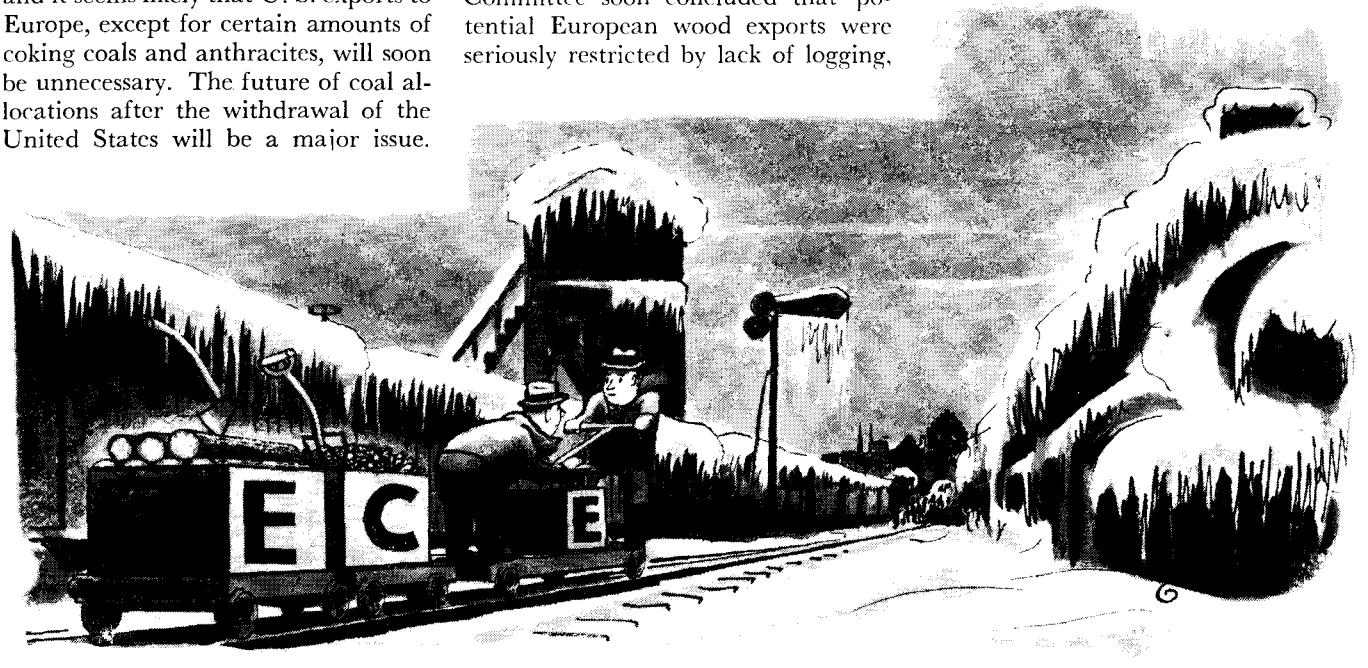
The prewar system of international railroad-car exchange has been restored and set in operation by the Transport Committee; a freedom-of-the-road agreement has been worked out, which has facilitated extensive and productive movement of European trucks and vans.

During 1948, Europe produced 10.5 million more tons of crude steel than it produced in 1947, an increase of twenty-nine per cent. Credit for a part of this increase belongs properly to the ECE Steel Committee's reorganization of the flow of coal and coke, its activities in the field of scrap, and its accurate and provocative published analyses.

In its work on timber, the ECE is in fact staffed by FAO experts—a singular example of brotherly love between international agencies. The Timber Committee soon concluded that potential European wood exports were seriously restricted by lack of logging, road-building, and transport equipment, and also by lack of more-or-less sure future markets. A deal was then worked out through which ten countries would agree on timber needs and supply possibilities over the next two or three years. The five western European importing countries would assist the five eastern European exporting countries with some eight million dollars in credit, to be repaid in increased timber exports. A similar sum was to be granted by the International Bank.

With these credits, the necessary equipment and services would be provided. The exporting countries would ship the increased timber cut to agreed markets on agreed commercial terms. It was estimated that the sixteen million dollars spent in this fashion would produce, over the years 1949-1952, an additional quantity of timber valued at about $125 million. The International Bank has approved the scheme; and after considerable delays, two loans have just been granted (to Finland and Yugoslavia) and two others are under negotiation (to Czechoslovakia and Austria).

These are examples of generally successful ECE operations. The organization at Geneva has not been uniformly successful. It has been severely limited by its inability to come to grips with the problems of Germany and German economic relations with the rest of Europe. It has so far lacked an



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adequate solution to the issue of East-West trade. It has failed thus far to halt the trend toward highly nationalistic planning, in both western and eastern Europe. All three questions patently relate to political issues outside the control of a regional organization of the U. N. The future of the ECE, as well as of the European economy, may well turn, however, on the progress made over the next year toward solutions of these problems.

To observers watching the ECE in operation on a technical level, the most surprising fact is usually the degree to which practical economic arrangements may be worked out despite political conflict. In the grinding pressure of East-West distrust, the ECE has somehow managed to stay alive and carry on business, and to contemplate European recovery quite as though this were a sane world.

At worst, the ECE will have been an interesting and useful seminar on international economic co-operation. At best, it could grow into a forum wherein major decisions on Europe's economic development could be made over an extended period of time.

If the ECE were to end at this moment, it could still point to its record with some pride. Through work on its committees, increases in European production have been achieved totaling many times the ECE budget, or even the entire budget of the United Nations. The commission, in fact, offers convincing evidence against the frequently expressed theory that the U.N. is often inept when it is confronted with real problems.

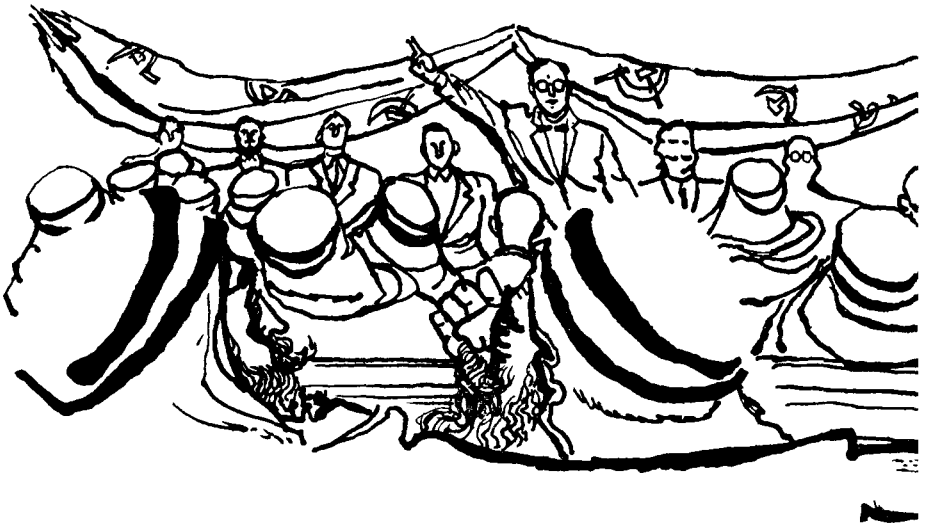
The major lesson learned during the first two years of ECE that is clearly applicable to other regional organizations is the need for breaking down each problem into its most detailed elements and starting work there. Avoidance of the general, and loving care for the particular, have been standard practice in Geneva.

If you were to ask a member of the ECE Secretariat what he thinks of the future, he would be apt to answer in terms of Ruhr production, shifts in the balance of payments, or harvest prospects for 1950. If you were to ask more specifically what he thinks will become of the Economic Commission for Europe, he would suggest that he is not Mr. Acheson or Mr. Vishinsky.

—ELSPETH ROSTOW

Israel

Red Star Over Islam



"If a ten years' war made Troy celebrated, if the triumph of the Christian made Antioch more illustrious, Acre will certainly obtain eternal fame as a city for which the whole world contended," wrote King Richard the Lion-Hearted eight centuries ago. Today, within Acre's Crusader-built walls, the world's two dominant political forces are contending for Arab votes. Acre is northern Israel's largest Arab center, and a headquarters of the Arab Communist movement, known as the Arab League for National Liberation. The headquarters are a block of century-old stone buildings, among which are the town's Roman Catholic Church, its Quaker relief center, and its brothel. A frequent league visitor is Tewfik Toubi, Israel's Arab Communist leader.

Recently I attended one of Toubi's meetings. Urban Arabs dressed in the best Bond Street style sat beside villagers in flowing white kaffiyehs (headdress), and Biblical abayahs (oriental robes). From a special room in the rear of the hall a small group of black-veiled women listened attentively. Convention prevented them from mixing with the men, even at a Communist meeting.

Most of the audience were refugees. Many men wore small red stars, embellished with the hammer and sickle, in the lapels of their European clothes. Scarlet hammer-and-sickle banners festooned the hall, and pictures of Stalin, Lenin, and Marx hung above the speakers' platform.

Youth was the distinguishing feature of Tewfik Toubi and his half-dozen cohorts on the dais. Toubi himself is twenty-eight, and would not be distinguishable as an Arab in a group of Italians, Frenchmen, or Scandinavians. A boyish face and horn-rimmed spectacles give him the air of a studious collegian, and his tweed jacket, gray slacks, and bow tie might be worn by an American correspondent.

Toubi has been a newspaperman most of his working life, and now edits the Arab Communist paper, *Al-Ittahad*. Despite his upper-class background and his American University in Beirut degree, he can mix with the poorest and most backward peasants. Last election day I saw him at the polls in Acre, struggling with scores of hysterical Arab women he was trying to line up before the ballot box.

Toubi's speech did not reveal him

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as a fire-eater. He quietly promised to right all the wrongs done to Israel's Arabs, and made many accusations against those whom he held responsible. The well-dressed effendis (Arab landlords) listened with rapt attention as he promised that the Communists would restore the land which the Israel government had confiscated. A group of young men in coveralls and parts of old British Army uniforms cheered when Toubi said that under a Communist régime they would again have their jobs at the refineries, railways, and docks.

Almost all of the listeners were deeply moved when told that they would be reunited with wives, husbands, parents, or children now in Lebanon, Jordan, or Syria. Toubi ended his speech with ringing assertions that when capitalism was overthrown and a "people's government" established, the wrongs brought about by "Anglo-American imperialism" would be righted, the original partition plan would be enforced, and purely Arab towns like Acre would become part of a free and independent Arab state.

Tewfik Toubi is a capable party dialectician and the only Arab Communist who holds a seat in a national parliament. In the Jewish state's legislature, he has the dual distinction of being the youngest member and the only Arab Communist. Israel's is the only legal, above-ground Communist Party in the Middle East. There the party received about three per cent of the total national vote in the first election, but one of every three Arab voters voted for Toubi. Two other Arabs have seats in the 120-delegate Parliament.

The Communist Party secretary at Acre, Michel Wahabi, is only twenty-three years old. He is considered one of the best-dressed men in Acre, and his blond good looks would not be out of place in a group of Oxford students. He teaches Hebrew and English in the Roman Catholic Boys' School, and is also the leader of the town's Christian Endeavor Society. I once asked Michel how he reconciled these activities with Lenin's dictum that "religion is the opiate of the people." "I never knew Lenin said that," he answered. "I have never read much about Communism, but it seems like the only answer for the Arabs in our present fix. Where else can we turn?"

One day last winter, after this conversation, I met Michel on the bus from Haifa. He was coming from the party's area headquarters, and was loaded down with pamphlets: *The Communist Manifesto, The Life of Lenin, Writings of Stalin,* and *Anglo-American Imperialism and World War II.* This was his first large dose of party literature. It was apparent that Michel was soon going to be far better educated in Communist dialectic than most of the local party leaders. All were neophytes in both leadership and party dialectic, since their Communist education had been acquired entirely in the past eighteen months. Many were originally indoctrinated in Israel prisoner-of-war camps. There they came under the influence of the handful of Communists who had not left the country during the war. Brandishing the torch of irredentism for such areas as western Galilee and Jaffa, these men set fire to the latent but suppressed nationalist instincts of the young Arabs.

Irredentism, along with the arrest of political prisoners and the confiscation of Arab property, was the issue which attracted most of the neophytes to Communism. Few have read any Communist literature, and most of them still acquire their knowledge of Marxism from the speeches of visiting orators such as the unquestionably effective Toubi.

Once I met two of these young men in the mud-hut village of Bana, high on a western Galilee hilltop. They had walked twenty miles from Acre to get recruits for the party. Bana had never had more than a nodding acquaintance with the outside world. The only previous political activity there had been the recruiting of allies in family feuds. Today half the population consists of refugees from neighboring Arab villages that have been destroyed. With the help of the priest's son, the two young organizers collected a large and enthusiastic audience in Bana's Orthodox Church. The refugees listened avidly to promises of restoration of their villages and fields. The organizers have canvassed Israel's most remote Arab settlements, and have, with similar appeals, acquired a wide following.

In reality, the Arab refugees still in Israel are relatively well off. Most of them have roofs over their heads, and neither disease nor starvation is prevalent. The new state, is, however, surrounded by a ring of misery. Over seven hundred thousand Arabs, who a year or two ago lived in what is now Israel, are concentrated along its borders, in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egyptian-occupied southern Palestine.

One refugee encampment I visited was in Beirut, the Paris of the Middle

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East. Night life in the garish casinos along the Mediterranean was going full blast. A twenty-piece American swing band blared from a swank club not far from refugee relief headquarters. In the encampment, located in a graceful cedar forest about a ten-minute drive from the town's center, were hundreds of Palestinians living in shelters improvised from rags, old blankets, sticks, and discarded gasoline tins.

A bony, hollow-faced resident of one shelter invited me in for a cup of coffee. Both he and his wife were dressed in rags. An infant that looked like a rain-soaked doll was in her arms. It stared at nothing with vacuous eyes and made no sound. The father, the mother, and I knew that the child would be dead by morning. "My other baby died last night," the father told me. "We had nothing to eat." They had received a monthly ration from the Red Cross, but you can't keep two adults and two babies alive on ten kilos of flour a month. The young father had been a master-mechanic in a Haifa mill. A year and a half before, false rumors of Jewish atrocities had been spread, and the terrified family had fled to Lebanon. The mechanic had hoped to be employed on the oil pipe line, but a thousand other Palestinians had already applied for the same job. The same situation existed in every employment field in Lebanon and the other Arab countries.

The residents of the cedar forest were of one mind. They wanted to go home. I told them of the great influx of new Jewish immigrants into Israel, but no one could be convinced that conditions in their former homes could be worse than in the forest. The possibility that Israel had no room for them seemed utterly beyond them.

There are frequent demonstrations by these people in Beirut and other refugee centers. When I asked the cedar-forest residents about the existence of Communist leadership, they were silent. All leftist activity is illegal in Beirut, as it is elsewhere in the Arab world, but the demonstrations I observed rang with familiar slogans attacking "American and British imperialism."

An Acre Communist leader and a well-informed Arab journalist in Beirut both told me that the party maintains a representative in each refugee camp, and that in areas where refugees are thickly settled there is a roaming representative. Emile Touma, once Haifa's Arab Communist leader, is said to direct all party activity in the Arab states. Since the British left Palestine, Touma has made numerous secret trips back and forth across the Lebanese frontier into Israel. Beirut is his Arab base, and Nazareth his Israel hideout. The Israel police would like to apprehend him for "illicit border crossings."

Emile Touma, Tewfik Toubi, and most Arab Communist leaders come from the cream of young Arab Christian intellectuals. Most of them were brought up in the Greek Orthodox Church. This church is traditionally under Russian protection in the Middle East, in much the same way as France and England have always been the protectors of the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches respectively. A few months ago Acre's Communists organized a refugee demonstration during a visit of northern Israel's Greek Orthodox Bishop. The demonstrators assailed the churchman with demands for "work instead of the Anglo-American dole." A local party leader objected to the demonstration, on the grounds that the bishop had nothing to do with either work or relief. Shortly thereafter he was purged from the party for "right-wing, Titoist, deviationist tendencies."

I later talked to this former party leader, and he confirmed the rumor, current in Israel today, that the man behind much Middle East Communist activity is a Russian priest named Archimandrite Leonid, who lives in the Russian monastery at Ein Karem, on the Israel side of the Jerusalem enclave. Father Leonid was sent to Palestine by the Moscow Synod of the Orthodox Church. He now has control of Russian Ecclesiastic Mission and Russian Orthodox Society property in Israel. It includes buildings and real estate in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Nazareth, and Tiberias, and is unofficially estimated to be worth one hundred million dollars. My informant told me that most financial resources of Israel's Arab Communists can be traced to receipts from clandestine sales of this property. *Al-Ittahad* is reputed to be financed from this source, as are many of the other Communist publications which circulate secretly in the Arab countries.

The Arab Communists claim a membership and party support of over sixty thousand voters in Israel, but no one can accurately determine the strength of Communism elsewhere in the Middle East. Since the party is outlawed everywhere else, it must carry on all of its activities underground. An actual count of its members has never been made. Judging by the refugee demonstrations that are reputedly Communist-organized, the party's strength is great among the seven hundred thousand ex-Palestinians who have nothing to lose but their misery.

The plight of Palestine's Arab refugees is the most dangerous factor in the already-boiling Middle East caldron. Some relief experts say that there is danger of these Arabs becoming "permanent refugees." If no long-term solution of their problems is found, extremist political activity can easily utilize them to throw the whole area into a chaos which would only succeed in creating many more refugees. Only by integrating these people into the normal life of the area can the threat be removed.

Returning the refugees to their original homes is in most cases impossible, for thousands of new Jewish immigrants have been moved into the Arab villages of Israel which were not destroyed in the war. If the Arabs were to be brought back en masse, and the Jewish immigrants evacuated, the resulting dislocation and instability would be just as bad—or even worse—than those that now exist.

—Don Peretz

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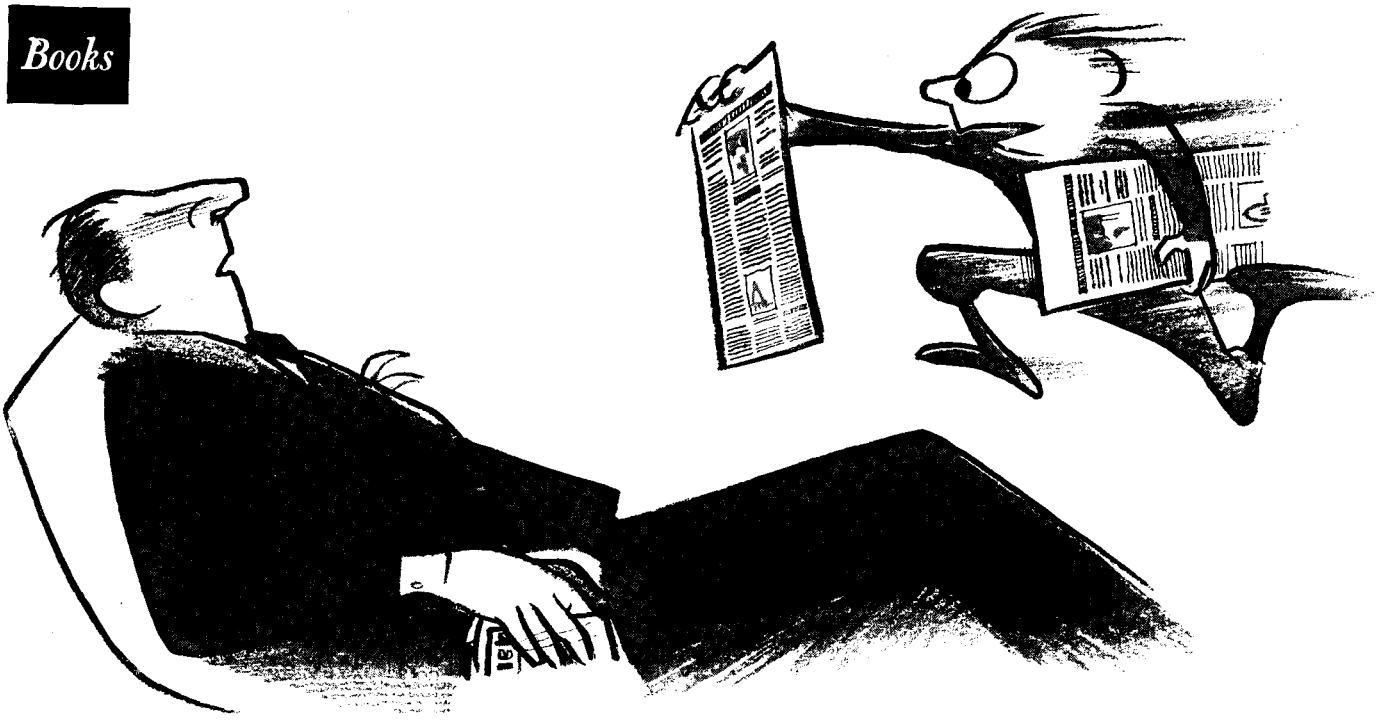
Books



Plenty of Muck, No Rakers

"Calvin Coolidge killed the New York *World*," my newspaper friend said.

It was natural that after the death of the New York *Sun* we should remember the *World,* which had been even more loudly lamented.

"Coolidge killed the *World* when he was elected in 1924 despite the fact that he had sat unprotesting through the gigantic oil steals of the Harding Administration. His victory in New York and most other places showed that the American people were no longer much interested in the type of crusading journalism the *World* specialized in. The paper hung on till 1931, but it was apathy and not competition, the boom and not the crash, which sent it down. There hasn't been a paper like it."

A few newspapermen may dispute this last statement, but no one, I think, will deny that muckraking appears in retrospect to have been an integral part of an era, an era that ended with the soggy public response to the Teapot Dome disclosures. For a time, it merely seemed that prosperity had momentarily smothered the muckraking spirit. But the causes for the decay of the muckraking tradition go deeper. Certainly the economic want and suffering of the early 1930's did not revive it. Henry Demarest Lloyd's *Wealth Against Commonwealth* of 1894 found no echo in 1932.

Who is there to do the great muckraking classic on the electric-light-and-power holding companies, such as Ida Tarbell did on the Standard Oil Company? John Chamberlain, who, in *Farewell to Reform* (1932), pronounced a premature obituary over many phases of the middle-class liberal adventure, was not too hasty in pointing out the death of the muckraking spirit. Only in the related field of the naturalistic novel has the old path laid out by Frank Norris and Theodore Dreiser been subsequently broadened —by writers like James T. Farrell and John Steinbeck.

It is of interest, therefore, to revisit the world of Norris and Sinclair, of Ida Tarbell, Ray Stannard Baker, and the most famous reporter of them all—Lincoln Steffens—to see if we can find the roots of their appeal, assess their values, and hazard, if we can, a guess as to the causes of their decline.

A useful vehicle for such appraisal is *The Autobiography of Lincoln Steffens* (published by Harcourt, Brace in 1931, and recently reissued as a Harbrace Classic). Steffens may not have been the greatest muckraker, but he did write the most arresting autobiography. Others surpassed him in certain respects. Ida Tarbell, for example, was more industrious, and industry was the hallmark of the topnotch muckraker. Ray Stannard Baker had a pinpoint accuracy which Steffens did not always match. But Steffens still stands out as the major figure. He had flair, wit, driving vitality, and imagination. "Pittsburgh: Hell With the Lid Lifted" and "Philadelphia: Corrupt and Contented" were two of his stabbing titles that have passed into common speech.

Steffens's persistent analysis of the pathology of politics led him to two fundamental generalizations which

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probably epitomized the political thinking of his generation. Steffens wrote that "In a country where business is dominant, business men must and will corrupt a government which can pass laws to hinder or help business." Whether it was a railroad baron in California, a lumber king in Minnesota, or a traction magnate in Chicago, everywhere the drive of the big businessman was to seek favors, franchises, and exemptions. At the core of corruption, therefore, were the respectable.

The primary instrument of this system was the political boss. Steffens's second conclusion was that the "real sin" of the boss is "disloyalty." As he explained it to "Iz" Durham, G.O.P. leader of Philadelphia, when the latter lay on his deathbed: "He was a born leader of the common people, I reasoned; he had taught them to like and to trust him, even with their votes; he had gathered up . . . the power which lay in their ballots, their trust and their loyalty to him; and he, the good fellow, had . . . turned it into franchises and other grants of the common wealth, which he and his gang had sold to rich business men and other enemies of the people. He was a traitor to his own."

If the business interests' desire for privilege was the cause and the disloyalty of bosses the means of making our democracy corrupt and unrepresentative, what was the cure? Steffens demonstrated again and again with pitiless clarity the futile nature of conventional "reform" movements: Good government, he claimed, was too bleak an ideal, and the middle classes too amorphous a power, to give such movements vitality or permanence.

Steffens's first affirmative reaction was to offer the analogy of Adam and Eve in the Garden. The moral was to take away the apple of profit and special privilege. But later, he shifted to the view that the same disloyal bosses who managed the system could break it if they were given free rein—"the men who did the wrong had the power, imagination, and courage to undo it."

Thirty years of history have deadened the impact and undermined the faith and techniques of Steffens and his coworkers. Crusading writers in the age of Steffens wrote for an audience much of which was but one generation removed from the relative simplicities of life on the farm or in the small town. Such new urban dwellers were accustomed to a high standard of political morality, enforced by the sanctions of community opinion. In the big city, groping for a substitute for village gossip and the town meeting, they found the muckraker and the daily newspaper and the monthly magazine. Steffens and his colleagues articulated the old community values in the socially disorganized metropolis.

Today's generation, city-born and -bred, feels no such discrepancy and no such need. To it, disclosures of "fixed" contracts and police-gambler tie-ups are "old stuff." Its members will read such disclosures, but they will not boost any publisher's circulation figures in their rush to do so.

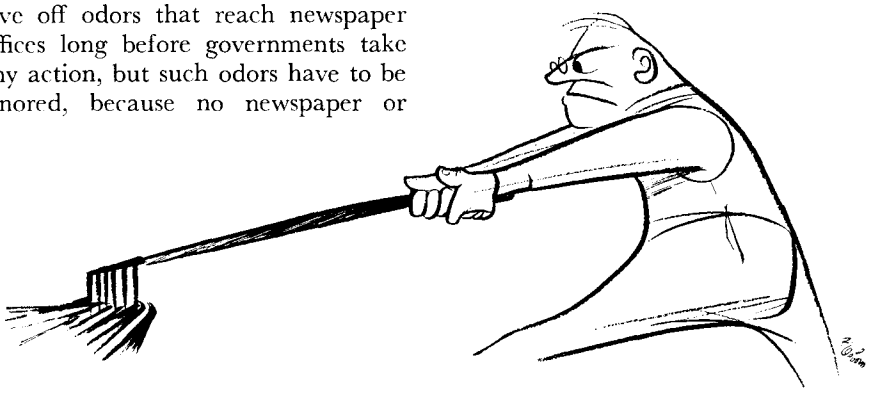
This emotional readjustment has occurred in several other areas. The shock of discovering how the other half lives has worn off. Slums and rickets and vice are still with us, but we look upon the "submerged ten million" more as a problem in economic underconsumption than as objects of our humanitarian sympathies.

While we have been domesticating the urban and industrial revolutions, techniques in political corruption have steadily grown more subtle and refined. Political cesspools like the post-Huey Long régime in Louisiana, and the present nationwide gambling syndicate, give off odors that reach newspaper offices long before governments take any action, but such odors have to be ignored, because no newspaper or magazine has the resources to hunt them down. One, or even two or three leg men cannot crack such a story, as they could in Steffens's day. The result is a thickening atmosphere of cynicism. This intellectual smog is the product of an uneasy knowledge that there are many operations afoot which, if we knew all about, we probably wouldn't like. Combined with this is the painful awareness that unless we hire a battery of lawyers and accountants to investigate, we are not likely to find out much about such complex chicaneries.

As the challenge to the potential muckraker has become more complex, his confidence in his own purposes has ebbed. Surely, he says to himself, writers have unmasked the illicit relationship between business and politics so often that it does not need to be done again, despite the undeniable therapeutic effect. The last city Lincoln Steffens muckraked was Boston, and there he reached a point, after having investigated a score of cities and states, where he found he could not write the same story again. Today many would-be muckrakers arrive at a symbolic Boston without ever having stopped anywhere else.

Meanwhile, we have lost faith in both of Steffens's panaceas. We have known enough "strong men" full of imagination and intelligence to preclude our seeing a savior in a Lenin or a Mussolini. Nor is socialism a sure answer to the bewildering problems of power and leadership. Steffens wrote: "The government of business and the political government should be one." But our generation has learned that the margin for corruption can be the margin of our freedom. In any event, the emphasis is misplaced, for the source of corruption lies not in the apple, but in the soul of Eve, which prompted her to take the apple.

—William V. Shannon



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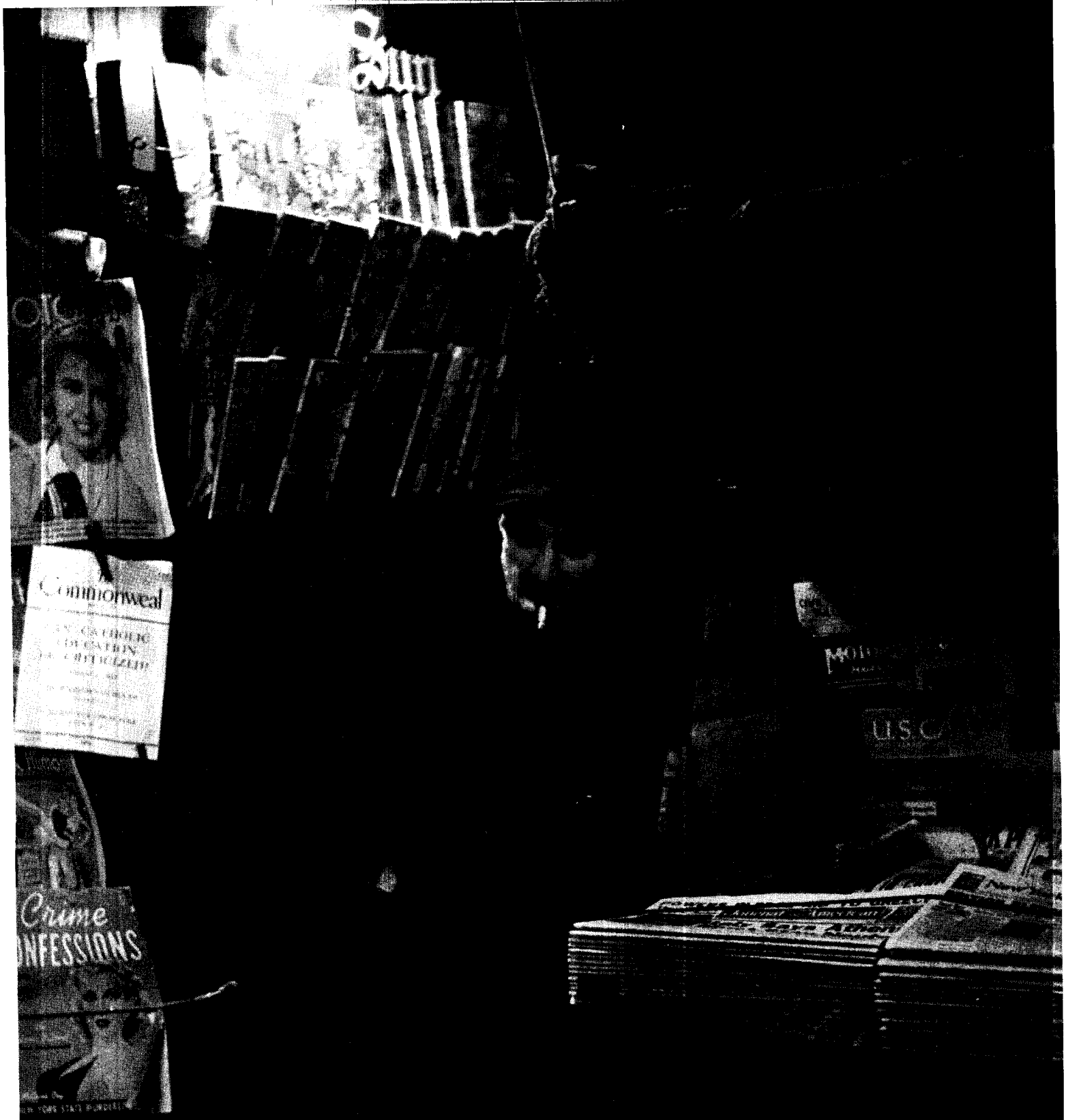

Newsstand: the polling booth of the American reader

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NEXT ISSUE

FASCISM IN THE AMERICAS

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